

THE  
W O R K S  
OF  
WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

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VOL. XLIIH.  
ROMANCES VOL. XXXIV.

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ZWICKAU,  
PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN

1 8 2 3.

(23)





*Laurent eno: & fco:*

*Joanhoe, Vol. II.*



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WORKS

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WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

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VOL. XLIII.

ROMANCES VOL. XXXIV.

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(21)



HARBO

3

WATER



# I V A N H O E;

## A ROMANCE.

BY "THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY," ETC.

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*Now fitted the halter, now traversed the cart,  
And often took leave, — but seem'd loth to depart!*

PRIOR.

---

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ZWICKAU,

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1823.



JOHN A. B.

ADVICE

BY THE ATTORNEY AT LAW

For the purpose of the present case, it is necessary to state that the said John A. B. is a resident of the County of ... State of ... and that he is the owner of the premises described in the foregoing petition. It is further stated that the said John A. B. is a single man, of the age of ... years, and that he is of the age of ... years.

JOHN A. B.  
Attorney at Law  
1881



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# IVANHOE.

---

## CHAPTER XII.

*The heralds left their pricking up and down.  
Now ringen trumpets loud and clarion.  
There is no more to say, but east and west,  
In go the spears sadly in the rest,  
In goth the sharp spur into the side,  
There see men who can just and who can ride;  
There shiver shaftes upon shieldes thick,  
He feeleth through the heart sponne the prick;  
Up springen speares, twenty feet in height,  
Out go the swordes as the silver bright;  
The helms they to-hewn and to-shred;  
Out burst the blood with stern streames red.*

*Chaucer.*

---

**M**ORNING arose in unclouded splendour, and ere the sun was much above the horizon, the idlest or the most eager of the spectators appear-



ed on the common, moving to the lists as to a general centre, in order to secure a favourable situation for viewing the expected games.

The marshals and their attendants appeared next on the field, together with the heralds, for the purpose of receiving the names of the knights who intended to just, with the side which each chose to espouse. This was a necessary precaution, in order to secure some equality betwixt the two bodies who should be opposed to each other.

According to due formality, the Disinherited Knight was to be considered as leader of the one body, while Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had been rated as having done second-best in the preceding day, was named first champion of the other band. Those who had concurred in the challenge adhered to his party of course, excepting only Ralph De Vipont, whom his fall had rendered unfit so soon to put on his armour. There was no want of distinguished and noble candidates to fill up the ranks on either side.

In fact, although the general tournament, in which all knights fought at once, was more dangerous than single encounters, they were, nevertheless, more frequented and practised by the chivalry of the age. Many knights, who had not sufficient confidence in their own skill to defy a single adversary of high reputation, were, never-



theless, desirous of displaying their valour in the general combat, where they might meet others with whom they were more upon an equality. On the present occasion, about fifty knights were inscribed as desirous of combating upon each side, when the marshals declared that no more could be admitted, to the disappointment of several who were too late in preferring their claim to be included.

About the hour of ten o'clock, the whole plain was crowded with horsemen, horsewomen, and foot-passengers, hastening to the tournament; and shortly after a grand flourish of trumpets announced Prince John and his retinue, attended by many of those knights who meant to take share in the game, as well as others who had no such intention.

About the same time arrived Cedric the Saxon, with the Lady Rowena, unattended, however, by Athelstane. This baron had arrayed his tall and strong person in armour, in order to take his place among the combatants; and, considerably to the surprise of Cedric, had chosen to enlist himself on the part of the Knight Templar. The Saxon, indeed, had remonstrated strongly with his friend upon the injudicious choice he had made of his party; but he had only received that sort of answer usually given by those who are



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more obstinate in following their own course, than strong in justifying it.

His best, if not his only reason, for adhering to the party of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Athelstane had the prudence to keep to himself. Though his apathy of disposition prevented his taking any means to recommend himself to the Lady Rowena, he was, nevertheless, by no means insensible to her charms, and considered his union with her as a matter already fixed beyond doubt, by the assent of Cedric and her other friends. It had therefore been with smothered displeasure that he beheld the victor of the preceding day select Rowena as the object of that honour which it became his privilege to confer. In order to punish him for a preference which seemed to interfere with his own suit, Athelstane, confident of his strength, and to whom his flatterers at least ascribed great skill in arms, had determined not only to deprive the Disinherited Knight of his powerful succour, but, if an opportunity should offer, to make him feel the weight of his battle-axe.

Bracy, and other knights attached to Prince John, in obedience to a hint from him, had joined the party of the challengers, John being desirous to secure, if possible, the victory to that side. On the other hand, many other knights, both English and Norman, natives and strangers, took



part against the challengers, the more readily that the opposite band was to be led by so distinguished a champion as the Disinherited Knight had approved himself.

So soon as Prince John observed that the destined Queen of the day had arrived upon the field, assuming that air of courtesy which sat well upon him when he was so pleased, he rode forward to meet her, doffed his bonnet, and dismounting from his horse, assisted the Lady Rowena from her saddle, while his followers uncovered at the same time, and one of the most distinguished dismounted to hold her palfrey.

“It is thus,” said Prince John, “that we set the dutiful example of loyalty to the Queen of Love and Beauty, and are ourselves her guide to the throne which she must this day occupy. — Ladies,” he said, “attend your Queen, as you wish to be distinguished by like honours.”

So saying, the Prince marshalled Rowena to the seat of honour opposite his own, while the fairest and most distinguished ladies present crowded after her to obtain places as near as possible to their temporary sovereign.

No sooner was Rowena seated, than a burst of music, half-drowned by the shouts of the multitude, greeted her new dignity. Meantime, the sun shone fierce and bright upon the polished arms of the knights of either side, who crowded



the opposite extremities of the lists, and held eager conference together concerning the best mode of arranging their line of battle, and supporting the conflict.

The heralds then proclaimed silence until the laws of the tourney should be rehearsed. These were calculated in some degree to abate the dangers of the day; a precaution the more necessary, as the conflict was to be maintained with sharp swords and pointed lances.

The champions were therefore prohibited to thrust with the sword, and were confined to striking. A knight, it was announced, might use a mace or battle-axe at pleasure, but the dagger was a prohibited weapon. A knight unhorsed might renew the fight on foot with any other on the opposite side in the same predicament; but mounted horsemen were in that case forbidden to assail him. When any knight could force his antagonist to the extremity of the lists, so as to touch the palisade with his person or arms, such opponent was obliged to yield himself vanquished, and his armour and horse were placed at the disposal of the conqueror. A knight thus overcome was not permitted to take further share in the combat. If any knight was struck down, and unable to recover his feet, his squire or page might enter the lists and drag his master out of the press; but in that case the knight was ad.



judged vanquished, and his arms and horse declared forfeited. The combat was to cease as soon as Prince John should throw down his leading-staff, or truncheon; another precaution usually taken to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood by the too long endurance of a sport so desperate. Any knight breaking the rules of the tournament, or otherwise transgressing the rules of honourable chivalry, was liable to be stript of his arms, and, having his shield reversed, to be placed in that posture astride upon the bars of the palisade, and exposed to public derision, in punishment of his unknighly conduct. Having announced these precautions, the heralds concluded with an exhortation to each good knight to do his duty, and to merit favour from the Queen of Beauty and of Love.

This proclamation having been made, the heralds withdrew to their stations. The knights, entering at either end of the lists in long procession, arranged themselves in a double file, precisely opposite to each other, the leader of each party being in the centre of the foremost rank; a post which he did not occupy until each had carefully arranged the ranks of his party, and stationed every one in his place.

It was a goodly, and at the same time an anxious sight, to behold so many gallant champions mounted bravely, and armed richly, stand ready



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prepared for an encounter so formidable, seated on their war-saddles like so many pillars of iron, and awaiting the signal of encounter with the same ardour as their generous steeds, which, by neighing and pawing the ground, gave signal of their impatience.

As yet the knights held their long lances upright, their bright points glancing to the sun, and the streamers with which they were decorated fluttering over the plumage of the helmets. Thus they remained while the marshals of the field surveyed their ranks with the utmost exactness, lest either party had more or fewer than the appointed number. The tale was found exactly complete. The marshals then withdrew from the lists, and William de Wyvil, with a voice of thunder, pronounced the signal words — *Laissez aller!* The trumpets sounded as he spoke — the spears of the champions were at once lowered and placed in the rests — the spurs were dashed into the flanks of the horses, and the two foremost ranks of either party rushed upon each other in full gallop, and met in the middle of the lists with a shock, the sound of which was heard at a mile's distance.

The consequences of the encounter were not instantly seen, for the dust raised by the trampling of so many steeds darkened the air, and it was a minute ere the anxious spectators could



see the fate of the encounter. When the fight became visible, half the knights on each side were dismounted, some by the dexterity of their adversary's lance, — some by the superior weight, which had broke down both horse and man, — some lay stretched on earth as if never more to rise — some had already gained their feet, and were closing hand to hand with those of the enemy who were in the same predicament — and two or three, who had received wounds by which they were disabled, were stopping their blood by their scarfs, and endeavouring to extricate themselves from the tumult. The mounted knights, whose lances had been almost all broken by the fury of the encounter, were now closely engaged with their swords, shouting their war-cries, and exchanging buffets, as if honour and life depended on the issue of the combat.

The tumult was presently increased by the advance of the second rank on either side; which, acting as a reserve, now rushed on to aid their companions. The followers of Brian de Bois-Guilbert shouted — “*Ha! Beau-seant! Beau-seant!*” \*) — for the Temple — for the Temple.”

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\*) *Beau-seant* was the name of the Templars' banner, which was half black, half white, to intimate, it is said, that they were candid and fair towards Christians, but black and terrible towards infidels.



The opposite party shouted in answer — « *Desdichado! Desdichado!* » — which watch-word they took from the motto upon their leader's shield.

The champions thus encountering each other with the utmost fury, and with alternate success, the tide of battle seemed to flow now toward the southern, now toward the northern extremity of the lists, as the one or the other party prevailed. Meantime the clang of the blows, and the shouts of the combatants, mixed fearfully with the sound of the trumpets, and drowned the groans of those who fell, and lay rolling defenceless beneath the feet of the horses. The splendid armour of the combatants was now defaced with dust and blood, and gave way to every stroke of the sword and battle-axe. The gay plumage, shorn from the crests, drifted upon the breeze like snow-flakes. All that was beautiful and graceful in the martial array had disappeared, and what was now visible was only calculated to awake terror or compassion.

Yet such is the force of habit, that not only the vulgar spectators, who are naturally attracted by sights of horror, but even the ladies who crowded the galleries, saw the conflict with a thrilling interest certainly, but without a wish to withdraw their eyes from a sight so terrible. Here and there, indeed, a fair cheek might turn pale, or a faint scream might be heard, as a lover, a



brother, or a husband was struck from his horse. But, in general, the ladies around encouraged the combatants, not only by clapping their hands, but even by exclaiming, « Brave lance! Good sword!» when any successful thrust or blow took place under their observation.

Such being the interest taken by the fair sex in this bloody game, that of the men is more easily understood. It shewed itself in loud acclamations upon every change of fortune, while all eyes were so rivetted on the lists, that the spectators seemed as if they themselves dealt and received the blows which were there so freely bestowed. And between every pause was heard the voice of the heralds, exclaiming, « Fight on, brave knights! Man dies, but glory lives! — Fight on — death is better than defeat! — Fight on, brave knights! for bright eyes behold your deeds!»

Amid the varied fortunes of the combat, the eyes of all endeavoured to discover the leaders of each band, who, mingling in the thick of the fight, encouraged their companions both by voice and example. Both displayed great feats of gallantry, nor did either Bois-Guilbert or the Disinherited Knight find in the ranks opposed to them a champion who could be termed their unquestioned match. They repeatedly endeavoured to single out each other, spurred by mutual



animosity, and aware that the fall of either leader might be considered as decisive of victory. Such, however, was the crowd and confusion, that, during the earlier part of the conflict, their efforts to meet were unavailing, and they were repeatedly separated by the eagerness of their followers, each of whom were anxious to win honour, by measuring their strength against the leader of the opposite party.

But when the field became thin by the numbers on either side, who, having yielded themselves vanquished, had been compelled to the extremity of the lists, or had been otherwise rendered incapable of continuing the strife, the Templar and the Disinherited Knight at length encountered hand to hand, with all the fury that mortal animosity, joined to rivalry of honour, could inspire. Such was the address of each in parrying and striking, that the spectators broke forth into a unanimous and involuntary shout, expressive of their delight and admiration.

But at this moment the party of the Disinherited Knight had the worst; the gigantic arm of Front-de-Bœuf on the one flank, and the ponderous strength of Athelstane on the other, bearing down and dispersing those immediately exposed to them. Finding themselves freed from their immediate antagonists, it seems to have occurred to both these knights at the same instant,



that they would render the most decisive advantage to their party, by aiding the Templar in his contest with his rival. Turning their horses, therefore, at the same moment, the Norman spurred towards him on the one side, and the Saxon on the other. It was utterly impossible that the object of this unequal and unexpected assault could have sustained it, had he not been warned by a general cry from the spectators, who could not but take interest in one exposed to such disadvantage.

“Beware! beware! Sir Disinherited Knight!” was shouted so universally, that the knight became aware of his danger, and striking a full blow at the Templar, he reined back his steed in the same moment, so as to escape the career of Athelstane, and Front-de-Bœuf; these knights, therefore, their aim being thus eluded, rushed from opposite sides betwixt the object of their attack and the Templar, almost running their horses against each other ere they could stop their career. Recovering their horses, however, and wheeling them round, the whole three pursued their purpose of bearing to the earth the Disinherited Knight.

Nothing could have saved him except the remarkable strength and activity of the noble horse which he had won on the preceding day.



This stood him in the more stead, as the horse of Bois-Guilbert was wounded, and those of Front-de-Bœuf and Athelstane were both tired with the weight of their gigantic masters, clad in complete armour, and with the preceding exertions of the day. The admirable horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight, and the activity of the noble animal which he mounted, enabled him for a few minutes to keep at sword's point his three antagonists, turning and wheeling with the agility of a hawk upon the wing, keeping his enemies as far separate as he could, and rushing now against the one, now against the other, dealing sweeping blows with his sword, without waiting to receive those which were aimed at him in return.

But although the lists rang with the applauses of his dexterity, it was evident that he must at last be overpowered; and those around Prince John implored him with one voice to throw down his warder, and to save so brave a knight from the disgrace of being overcome by odds.

«Not I, by the light of Heaven!» answered Prince John; «this same springal, who conceals his name, and despises our proffered hospitality, hath already gained one prize, and may now let others have their turn.» As he spoke thus, an unexpected incident changed the fortune of the day.



There was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse, large of size, tall, and to all appearance powerful and strong. This knight, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, had hitherto evinced very little interest in the event of the fight, beating off with seeming ease those knights who attacked him, but neither pursuing his advantages, nor himself assailing any one. In short, he acted the part rather of a spectator than of a party in the tournament, a circumstance which procured him among the bystanders the name of *Le Noir Faineant*, or the Black Sluggard.

At once this knight seemed to throw aside his apathy, when he discovered the leader of his party so hard bested; for, setting spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, he came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming, in a voice like a trumpet-call, "*Desdichado*, to the rescue!" It was high time; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front-de-Bœuf had got nigh to him with his uplifted sword; but ere the blow could descend, the Sable Knight encountered him, and Front-de-Bœuf rolled on the ground, both horse and man. *Le Noir Faineant* then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Conningsburgh; and his own sword having been broken in his encounter with Front



de-Bœuf, he wrenched from the hand of the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and dealt him such a blow upon the crest, that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this feat, for which he was the more highly applauded that it was totally unexpected from him, the knight seemed to resume the sluggishness of his character, returning calmly to the northern extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as he best could with Brian de Bois-Guilbert. This was no longer matter of so much difficulty as formerly. The Templar's horse had bled much, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brian de Bois-Guilbert rolled on the field, incumbered with the stirrup, from which he was unable to draw his foot. His antagonist sprung from horseback, and commanded him to yield himself, when Prince John, more moved by the Templar's dangerous situation than he had been by that of his rival, saved him the mortification of confessing himself vanquished, by casting down his warder, and putting an end to the conflict.

It was, indeed, only the reliques and embers of the fight which continued to burn; for of the few knights who still continued in the lists, the greater part had, by tacit consent, forborne the conflict for some time, leaving it to be determined by the strife of the leaders.



The squires, who had found it a matter of danger and difficulty to attend their masters during the engagement, now thronged into the lists to pay their dutiful attendance to the wounded, who were removed with the utmost care and attention to the neighbouring pavilions, or to the quarters prepared for them in the adjoining village.

Thus ended the memorable field of Ashby de la Zouche, one of the most gallantly contested tournaments of that age; for although only four knights, including one who was smothered by the heat of his armour, had died upon the field, yet upwards of thirty were desperately wounded, four or five of whom never recovered. Several more were disabled for life; and those who escaped best carried the marks of the conflict to the grave with them. Hence it is always mentioned in the old records, as the Gentle and Free Passage of Arms of Ashby.

It being now the duty of Prince John to name the knight who had done best, he determined that the honour of the day remained with the knight whom the popular voice had termed *Le Noir Fainéant*. It was pointed out to the Prince, in impeachment of this decree, that the victory had been in fact won by the Disinherited Knight, who in the course of the day, had overcome six champions with his own hand, and who had finally unhorsed and struck down the leader of



the opposite party. But Prince John adhered to his own opinion, on the ground that the Disinherited Knight and his party had lost the day, but for the powerful assistance of the Knight of the Black Armour, to whom, therefore, he persisted in awarding the prize.

To the surprise of all present, however, the knight thus preferred was nowhere to be found. He had left the lists immediately when the conflict ceased, and had been observed by some spectators to move down one of the forest glades with the same slow pace and listless and indifferent manner which had procured him the epithet of the Black Sluggard. After he had been summoned twice by sound of trumpet, and proclamation of the heralds, it became necessary to name another to receive the honours which had been assigned to him. Prince John had now no further excuse for resisting the claim of the Disinherited Knight, whom, therefore, he named the champion of the day.

Through a field slippery with blood, and incumbered with broken armour and the bodies of slain and wounded horses, the marshals of the lists again conducted the victor to the foot of Prince John's throne.

"Disinherited Knight," said Prince John, "since by that only title you will consent to be known to us, we a second time award to you the



honours of this tournament, and announce to you your right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty, the Chaplet of Honour which your valour has justly deserved." The Knight bowed low and gracefully, but returned no answer.

While the trumpets sounded, while the heralds strained their voices in proclaiming honour to the brave and glory to the victor — while ladies waved their silken kerchiefs and embroidered veils, and while all ranks joined in a clamorous shout of exultation, the marshals conducted the Disinherited Knight across the lists to the foot of that throne of honour which was occupied by the Lady Rowena.

On the lower step of this throne the champion was made to kneel down. Indeed his whole action since the fight had ended seemed rather to have been upon the impulse of those around him than from his own free will; and it was observed that he tottered as they guided him the second time across the lists. Rowena, descending from her station with a graceful and dignified step, was about to place the chaplet which she held in her hand upon the helmet of the champion, when the marshals exclaimed with one voice, "It must not be thus — his head must be bare." The knight muttered faintly a few words, which were lost in the hollow of his helmet, but their purport



seemed to be a desire that his casque might not be removed.

Whether from love of form or from curiosity, the marshals paid no attention to his expressions of reluctance, but unhelmed him by cutting the laces of his casque, and undoing the fastening of his gorget. When the helmet was removed, the well-formed, yet sun-burnt features of a young man of twenty-five were seen, amidst a profusion of short fair hair. His countenance was as pale as death, and marked in one or two places with streaks of blood.

Rowena had no sooner beheld him than she uttered a faint shriek; but at once summoning up the energy of her disposition, and compelling herself, as it were, to proceed, while her frame yet trembled with the violence of sudden emotion, she placed upon the drooping head of the victor the splendid chaplet which was the destined reward of the day, and pronounced, in a clear and distinct tone, these words: "I bestow on thee this chaplet, Sir Knight, as the meed of valour assigned to this day's victor:" Here she paused a moment, and then firmly added, "And upon brows more worthy could a wreath of chivalry never be placed!"

The knight stooped his head, and kissed the hand of the lovely sovereign by whom his valour



had been rewarded; and then, sinking yet farther forward, lay prostrate at her feet.

There was a general consternation. Cedric, who had been struck mute by the sudden appearance of his banished son, now rushed forward, as if to separate him from Rowena. But this had been already accomplished by the marshals of the field, who, guessing the cause of Ivanhoe's swoon, had hastened to disarm him, and found that the head of a lance had penetrated his breast-plate, and inflicted a wound upon his side.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

*“Heroes, approach!” Atrides thus aloud.  
“Stand forth distinguish’d from the circling  
crowd,  
Ye who by skill or manly force may claim,  
Your rivals to surpass and merit fame.  
This cow, worth twenty oxen, is decreed,  
For him who farthest sends the winged reed.”*  
*Iliad.*

---

THE name of Ivanhoe was no sooner pronounced, than it flew from mouth to mouth with all the celerity with which eagerness could convey and curiosity receive it. It was not long ere it reached the circle of the Prince, whose brow darkened as he heard the news. Looking around him, however, with an air of scorn, “My lords,” said he, “and especially you, Sir Prior, what think ye of



the doctrine the learned tell us, concerning innate attractions and antipathies? Methinks that I felt the presence of my brother's minion, even when I least guessed whom yonder suit of armour enclosed."

"Front-de-Boeuf must prepare to restore his fief of Ivanhoe," said Bracy, who, having discharged his part honourably in the tournament, had laid his shield and helmet aside, and again mingled with the Prince's retinue.

"Ay," answered Waldemar Fitzurse, "this galant is likely to reclaim the castle and manor which Richard assigned to him, and which your Highness's generosity has since given to Front-de-Bœuf."

"Front-de-Bœuf," replied John, "is a man more willing to swallow three manors such as Ivanhoe, than to disgorge one of them. For the rest, sirs, I hope none here will deny my right to confer the fiefs of the crown upon the faithful followers who are around me, and ready to perform the usual military service, in the room of those who have wandered to foreign countries, and can neither render homage nor service when called upon."

The audience were too much interested in the question not to pronounce the Prince's assumed right altogether indubitable. "A generous Prince! — a most noble Lord, who thus takes



upon himself the task of rewarding his faithful followers!"

Such were the words which burst from the train, expectants all of them of similar grants at the expense of King Richard's followers and favourites, if indeed they had not as yet received such. Prior Aymer also assented to the general proposition, observing, however, "That the blessed Jerusalem could not indeed be termed a foreign country. She was *communis mater* — the mother of all Christians. But he saw not," he declared, "how the Knight of Ivanhoe could plead any advantage from this, since he (the Prior) was assured, that the crusaders, under Richard, had never proceeded much farther than Ascalon, which, as all the world knew, was a town of the Philistines, and entitled to none of the privileges of the Holy City."

Waldemar, whose curiosity had led him towards the place where Ivanhoe had fallen to the ground, now returned. "The gallant," said he, "is likely to give your Highness little disturbance, and to leave Front-de-Bœuf in the quiet possession of his gains — he is severely wounded."

"Whatever becomes of him," said Prince John, "he is victor of the day; and were he tenfold our enemy, or the devoted friend of our brother, which is perhaps the same, his wounds must be looked to — our own physician shall attend him."



A stern smile curled the Prince's lip as he spoke. Waldemar Fitzurse hastened to reply, that Ivanhoe was already removed from the lists, and in the custody of his friends.

"I was somewhat moved," he said, "to see the grief of the Queen of Love and Honour, whose sovereignty of a day this event has changed into mourning. I am not a man to be moved by a woman's lament for her lover, but this same Lady Rowena suppressed her sorrow with such dignity of manner, that it could only be discovered by her folded hands and her tearless eye, which trembled as it remained fixed on the lifeless form before her."

"Who is this Lady Rowena," said Prince John, "of whom we have heard so much?"

"A Saxon heiress of large possessions," replied the Prior Aymer; "a rose of loveliness, and a jewel of wealth; the fairest among a thousand, a bundle of myrrh, and a cluster of camphire."

"We shall cheer her sorrows," said Prince John, "and amend her blood by wedding her to a Norman. She seems a minor, and must therefore be at our royal disposal in marriage. — How say'st thou, De Bracy? What think'st thou of gaining fair lands and livings, by wedding a Saxon, after the fashion of the followers of the Conqueror?"



“If the lands are to my liking, my lord,” answered Bracy, “it will be hard to displease me with a bride; and deeply will I hold myself bound to your highness for a good deed, which will fulfil all promises made in favour of your servant and vassal.”

“We will not forget it,” said Prince John; “and that we may instantly go to work, command our seneschal presently to order the attendance of the Lady Rowena and her company — that is, the rude churl her guardian, and the Saxon ox whom the Black Knight struck down in the tournament, upon this evening’s banquet. — De Bigot,” he added to his seneschal, “thou wilt word this our second summons so courteously, as to gratify the pride of these Saxons, and make it impossible for them again to refuse; although, by the bones of Becket, courtesy to them is casting pearls before swine.”

Prince John had proceeded thus far, and was about to give the signal for retiring from the lists, when a small billet was put into his hand.

“From whence?” said Prince John, looking at the person by whom it was delivered.

“From foreign parts, my lord, but from whence I know not,” replied his attendant. “A Frenchman brought it hither, who said, he had ridden night and day to put it into the hands of your highness.”



The Prince looked narrowly at the superscription, and then at the seal, placed so as to secure the floss-silk with which the billet was surrounded, and which bore the impression of three fleurs-de-lis. John then opened the billet with apparent agitation, which visibly increased when he had perused the contents, which were expressed in these words —

*“Take heed to yourself, for the devil is unchained.”*

The Prince turned as pale as death, looked first on the earth and then up to heaven, like a man who has received news of sentence of death having been passed upon him. Recovering from the first effects of his surprise, he took Waldemar Fitzurse and Bracy aside, and put the billet into their hands successively.

“This may be a false alarm, or a forged letter,” said Bracy.

“It is France’s own hand and seal,” replied Prince John.

“It is time then,” said Fitzurse, “to draw our party to a head, either at York, or some other central place. A few days later, and it will be indeed too late. Your highness must break short this present mummary.”

“The yeomen and commons,” said Bracy, “must not be dismissed discontented, for lack of their share in the sports.”



“The day,” said Waldemar, “is not yet very far spent—let the archers shoot a few rounds at the target, and the prize be adjudged. This will be an abundant fulfilment of the Prince’s promises, so far as this herd of Saxon serfs is concerned.”

“I thank thee, Waldemar,” said the Prince; “thou remindest me, too, that I have a debt to pay to that insolent peasant who yesterday insulted our person. Our banquet also shall go forward to-night as we proposed. Were this my last hour of power, it should be an hour sacred to revenge and to pleasure—let new cares come with to-morrow’s new day.”

The sound of the trumpets soon recalled those spectators who had already begun to leave the field; and proclamation was made that Prince John, suddenly called by high and peremptory public duties, held himself obliged to discontinue the entertainments of to-morrow’s festival: Nevertheless, that, unwilling so many good yeomen should depart without a trial of skill, he was pleased to appoint them, before leaving the ground, presently to execute the competition of archery intended for the morrow. To the best archer a prize was to be awarded, being a bugle-horn, mounted with silver, and a silken baldrick richly ornamented, with a medallion of St Hubert, the patron of sylvan sport.



More than thirty yeomen at first presented themselves as competitors, several of whom were rangers and under-keepers in the royal forests of Needwood and Charnwood. When, however, the archers understood with whom they were to be matched, upwards of twenty withdrew themselves from the contest, unwilling to encounter the dishonour of almost certain defeat. For in those days the skill of each celebrated marksman was as well known for many miles round him, as the qualities of a horse trained at Newmarket are known to those who frequent that celebrated meeting.

The diminished list of competitors for sylvan fame still amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly the persons of these chosen yeomen, several of whom wore the royal livery. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigation, he looked for the object of his resentment, whom he observed standing in the same spot, and with the same composed countenance which he had exhibited upon the preceding day.

“Fellow,” said Prince John, “I guessed by thy insolent babble thou wert no true lover of the long-bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such merry-men as stand yonder.”

“Under favour, sir,” replied the yeoman, “I



have another reason for refraining to shoot, besides the fearing discomfiture and disgrace."

"And what is thy other reason," said Prince John, who, for some cause which perhaps he could not himself have explained, felt a painful curiosity respecting this individual.

"Because," replied the woodsman, "I know not if these yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same marks; and because, moreover, I know not how your grace might relish the winning of a third prize by one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure."

Prince John coloured as he put the question, "What is thy name, yeoman?"

"Locksley," answered the yeoman.

"Then, Locksley," said Prince John, "thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeomen have displayed their skill. If thou carriest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but if thou lovest it, thou shalt be stript of thy Lincoln green, and scourged out of the lists with bow-strings, for a wordy and insolent braggart."

"And how if I refuse to shoot on such a wager?" said the yeoman. — "Your grace's power, supported, as it is, by so many men-at-arms, may indeed easily strip and scourge me, but cannot compel me to bend or to draw my bow."

"If thou refusest my fair proffer," said the Prince, "the Provost of the lists shall cut thy



bow-string, break thy bow and arrows, and expel thee from the presence as a faint-hearted craven."

"This is no fair chance you put on me, proud Prince," said the yeoman, "to compel me to peril myself against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under the penalty of infamy if they should overshoot me. Nevertheless, I will obey your will."

"Look to him close, men-at-arms," said Prince John, "his heart is sinking; I am jealous lest he attempt to escape the trial. — And do you, good fellows, shoot boldly round; a buck and a butt of wine are ready for your refreshment in yonder tent, when the prize is won."

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. The contending archers took their distance in turn, at the bottom of the southern access; the distance between that station and the mark allowing full distance for what was called a shot at rovers. The archers, having previously determined by lot their order of precedence, were to shoot each three shafts in succession. The sports were regulated by an officer of inferior rank termed the Provost of the games; for the high rank of the marshals of the lists would have been held degraded, had they condescended to superintend the games of the yeomanry.



One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows, shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it, that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

“Now, Locksley,” said Prince John to the devoted yeoman, with a bitter smile, “wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldrick, and quiver to the Provost of the sports?”

“Sith it may be no better,” said Locksley, “I am content to try my fortune; on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert’s, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose.”

“That is but fair,” answered Prince John, “and it shall not be refused thee. — If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee.”

“A man can but do his best,” answered Hubert; “but my great-grandsire drew a good long bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonour his memory.”

The former target was now removed, and a



fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on the string. At length he made a step forward, and raising the bow at the full stretch of his left-arm, till the centre or grasping-place was nigh level with his face, he drew the bow-string to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner-ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

“You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert,” said his antagonist, bending his bow, “or that had been a better shot.”

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stept to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bow-string, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

“By the light of heaven!” said Prince John to Hubert, “an thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows.”

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. “An your highness were to hang me,” he said,



“a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow” —

“The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation,” interrupted John; “shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be the worse for thee.”

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind which had just arisen, and shot so successfully, that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

“A Hubert! a Hubert!” shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. “In the clout! — in the clout! — a Hubert for ever!”

“Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley!” said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

“I will notch his shaft for him, however,” replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity, that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamour. “This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood,” whispered the yeomen to each other;



“such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain.”

“And now,” said Locksley, “I crave your grace’s permission to plant such a mark as is used in the north country; and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it to win a smile from the bonny lass he loves best.”

He then turned to leave the lists. “Let your guards attend me,” he said, “if you please — I go but to cut a rod from the next willow bush.”

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape; but the cry of “Shame! shame!” which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man’s thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing, at the same time, that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill. “For his own part,” he said, “and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur’s round-table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years old,” he said, “might hit it with a headless shaft; but,” added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking



the willow wand upright in the ground, «he that hits that rod at five-score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, an it were the stout King Richard himself.”

«My grandsire,” said Hubert, «drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life — and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers — or rather, I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at the edge of our parson’s whittle, or at a wheat straw, or at a sun-beam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see.”

«Cowardly dog!” said Prince John. — «Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot; but, if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so. Howe’er it be, thou shalt not crow over us with a mere shew of superior skill.”

«I will do my best, as Hubert says,” answered Locksley; «no man can do more.”

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the mul-



itude awaited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill: his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost his dislike to his person. "These twenty nobles," he said, "which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty, if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our body guard, and be near to our person. For never did so strong a hand bend a bow, or so true an eye direct a shaft."

"Pardon me, noble Prince," said Locksley; "but I have vowed, that if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother, King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I."

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger; and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd, and was seen no more.

The victorious archer would not perhaps have escaped John's attention so easily, had not that Prince had other subjects of anxious and more important meditation pressing upon his mind at



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that instant. He called upon his chamberlain as he gave the signal for retiring from the lists, and commanded him instantly to gallop to Ashby, and seek out Isaac the Jew. "Tell the dog," he said, "to send me, before sun-down, two thousand crowns. He knows the security; but thou mayest shew him this ring for a token. The rest of the money must be paid at York within six days. If he neglects, I will have the unbelieving villain's head. Look that thou pass him not on the way; for the circumcised slave was displaying his stolen finery amongst us."

So saying, the Prince resumed his horse, and returned to Ashby, the whole crowd breaking up and dispersing upon his retreat.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

*In rough magnificence array'd,  
When ancient Chivalry display'd  
The pomp of her heroic games,  
And crested chiefs and tissued dames  
Assembled, at the clarion's call,  
In some proud castle's high-arch'd hall.*

*Warton.*

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PRINCE JOHN held his high festival in the Castle of Ashby. This was not the same building of which the stately ruins still interest the traveller, and which was erected at a later period by the Lord Hastings, High Chamberlain of England, one of the first victims of the tyranny of Richard the Third, and yet better known as one of Shakespeare's characters than by his historical fame. The castle and town of Ashby, at this time, belonged to Roger de Quincy, Earl of



Winchester, who, during the period of our history, was absent in the Holy Land. Prince John, in the meanwhile, occupied his castle, and disposed of his domains without scruple; and seeking at present to dazzle men's eyes by his hospitality and magnificence, had given orders for great preparations, in order to render the banquet as splendid as possible.

The purveyors of the Prince, who exercised, upon this and other occasions, the full authority of royalty, had swept the country of all that could be collected which was esteemed fit for their master's table. Guests also were invited in great numbers; and in the necessity in which he presently found himself of courting popularity, Prince John had extended these to a few distinguished Saxon and Danish families, as well as to the Norman nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. However despised and degraded on ordinary occasions, the great numbers of the Anglo-Saxons must necessarily render them formidable in the civil commotions which seemed approaching, and it was an obvious point of policy to secure popularity with their leaders.

It was accordingly the Prince's intention, which he for some time maintained, to treat these unwonted guests with a courtesy to which they had been as little accustomed. But although no man with less scruple made his ordinary habits and feel-



ings bend to his interest, it was the misfortune of this Prince, that his levity and petulance were perpetually breaking out, and undoing all that had been gained by his previous dissimulation.

Of this fickle temper he gave a memorable example in Ireland, when sent thither by his father. Henry the Second, with the purpose of buying golden opinions of the inhabitants of that new and important acquisition to the English crown. Upon this occasion the Irish chieftains contended which should first offer to the young Prince their loyal homage and the kiss of peace. But, instead of receiving their salutations with courtesy, John and his petulant attendants could not resist the temptation of pulling the long beards of the Irish chieftains, a conduct which, as might have been expected, was highly resented by these insulted dignitaries, and produced fatal consequences to the English domination in Ireland. It is necessary to keep these inconsistencies of John's character in view, that the reader may understand his conduct during the present evening.

In execution of the resolution which he had formed during his cooler moments, Prince John received Cedric and Athelstane with distinguished courtesy, and expressed his disappointment, without resentment, when the indisposition of Rowena was alleged by the former as a reason for her not attending upon his gracious summons.



Cedric and Athelstane were both dressed in the ancient Saxon garb, which, although not unhand-some in itself, and in the present instance composed of costly materials, was so remote in shape and appearance from that of the other guests, that Prince John took great credit to himself with Waldemar Fitzurse for refraining from laughter at a sight which the fashion of the day rendered so ridiculous. Yet, in the eye of sober judgment, the short close tunic and long mantle of the Saxons was a more graceful, as well as a more convenient dress, than the garb of the Normans, whose under garment was a long doublet, so loose as to resemble a shirt or waggoner's frock, covered by a cloak of scanty dimensions, neither fit to defend the wearer from cold or from rain, and the only purpose of which seemed to be to display as much fur, embroidery, and jewellery work, as the ingenuity of the tailor could contrive to lay upon it. The Emperor Charlemagne seems to have been very sensible of the inconveniencies arising from the fashion of this garment. "In heaven's name," said he, "to what purpose serve these abridged cloaks? If we are in bed they are no covering, on horseback they are no protection from the wind and rain, and when seated, they do not protect our legs from the damp or the frost."

Nevertheless, spite of this imperial objurga-



tion, the short cloaks continued in fashion down to the time of which we treat, and particularly among the princes of the house of Anjou. They were therefore in universal use among Prince John's courtiers; and the long mantle, which formed the upper garment of the Saxons, was held in proportional derision.

The guests were seated at a table which groaned under the quantity of good cheer. The numerous cooks who attended on the Prince's progress, having exerted all their art in varying the forms in which the ordinary provisions were served up, had succeeded almost as well as the modern professors of the culinary art in rendering them perfectly unlike their natural appearance. Besides these dishes of domestic origin, there were various delicacies brought from foreign parts, and a quantity of rich pastry, as well as of the simnel-bread and wastle cakes, which were only used at the tables of the highest nobility. The banquet was crowned with the richest wines, both foreign and domestic.

But, though luxurious, the Norman nobles were not, generally speaking, an intemperate race. While indulging themselves in the pleasures of the table, they aimed at delicacy, but avoided excess, and were apt to object gluttony and drunkenness to the vanquished Saxons, as vices peculiar to their inferior strain. Prince



John, indeed, and those who courted his pleasure by imitating his foibles, were apt to indulge to excess in the pleasures of the trencher and the goblet; and indeed it is well known that his death was occasioned by a surfeit upon peaches and new ale. His conduct, however, was an exception to the general manners of his countrymen.

With sly gravity, interrupted only by private signs to each other, the Norman knights and nobles beheld the ruder demeanour of Athelstane and Cedric at a banquet, to the form and fashion of which they were unaccustomed. And while their demeanour was thus the subject of sarcastic observation, the untaught Saxons unwittingly transgressed several of the arbitrary rules established for the regulation of society. Now, it is well known that a man may with more impunity be guilty of an actual breach either of real good breeding or of good morals, than appear ignorant of the most minute point of fashionable etiquette. Thus Cedric, who dried his hands upon a towel, instead of suffering the moisture to exhale by waving them gracefully in the air, incurred more ridicule than his companion Athelstane, when he swallowed to his own single share the whole of a large pasty composed of the most exquisite foreign delicacies, and termed at that time a *Karum-pie*. When, however, it was discovered by a serious cross-examination, that the Thane of



Conningsburgh (or Franklin, as the Normans termed him,) had no idea what he had been devouring, and that he had taken the contents of the Karum-pie for larks and pigeons, whereas they were in fact beccaficoes and nightingales, his ignorance brought him in for an ample share of the ridicule which would have been more justly bestowed on his gluttony.

The long feast had at length its end; and, while the goblet circulated freely, men talked of the feats of the preceding tournament, — of the unknown victor in the archery game, — of the Black Knight, whose self-denial had induced him to withdraw from the honours he had won, — and of the gallant Ivanhoe, who had so dearly bought the honours of the day. The topics were treated with military frankness, and the jest and laugh went round the hall. The brow of Prince John alone was overclouded during these discussions; some overpowering care seemed agitating his mind, and it was only when he received occasional hints from his attendants that he seemed to take interest in what was passing around him. On such occasions he would start up, quaff of a cup of wine as if to raise his spirits, and then mingle in the conversation by some observation made abruptly or at random.

“We drink this beaker,” said he, “to the health of Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, Champion of this



Passage of arms, and grieve that his wound renders him absent from our board — Let all fill to the pledge, and especially Cedric of Rotherham, the worthy father of a son so promising.”

“No, my lord,” replied Cedric, standing up, and placing on the table his untasted cup, “I yield not the name of son to the disobedient youth, who at once despises my commands, and relinquishes the manners and customs of his fathers.”

“’Tis impossible,” cried Prince John, with well-feigned astonishment, “that so gallant a knight should be an unworthy or disobedient son.”

“Yet, my lord,” answered Cedric, “so it is with this Wilfrid. He left my homely dwelling to mingle with the gay nobility of your brother’s court, where he learned to do those tricks of horsemanship which you prize so highly. He left it contrary to my wish and command; and in the days of Alfred that would have been termed disobedience — ay, and a crime severely punishable.”

“Alas!” replied Prince John, with a deep sigh of affected sympathy, “since your son was a follower of my unhappy brother, it need not be enquired where or from whom he learned the lesson of filial disobedience.”

Thus spoke Prince John; wilfully forgetting that of all the sons of Henry the Second, though



no one was free from the charge, he himself had been most distinguished for rebellion and ingratitude to his father.

«I think,” said he, «after a moment’s pause, «that my brother proposed to confer upon his favourite the rich manor of Ivanhoe.”

«He did endow him with it,” answered Cedric; «nor is it my least quarrel against my son, that he stooped to hold, as a feudal vassal, the very domains which his fathers possessed in free and independent right.”

«We shall then have your willing sanction, good Cedric,” said Prince John, «to confer this fief upon a person whose dignity will not be diminished by holding land of the British crown. Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,” he said, turning towards that Baron, «I trust you will so keep the goodly Barony of Ivanhoe, that Sir Wilfrid shall not incur his father’s farther displeasure by again entering upon that fief?”

«By St Anthony!” answered the black-brow’d giant, «I will consent that your highness shall hold me a Saxon, if either Cedric or Wilfrid, or the best that ever bore English blood, shall wrench from me the gift with which your highness has graced me.”

«Whoever shall call thee Saxon, Sir Baron,” replied Cedric, offended at a mode of expression by which the Normans frequently expressed their



habitual contempt of the English, «will do thee an honour as great as it is undeserved.”

Front-de-Bœuf would have replied, but Prince John's petulance and levity got the start.

«Assuredly,” said he, «my lords, the noble Cedric speaks truth; and his race may claim precedence over us as much in the length of their pedigrees as in the longitude of their cloaks.”

«They go before us indeed in the field — as deer before dogs,” said Malvoisin.

«And with good right may they go before us — forget not,” said the Prior Aymer, «the superior decency and decorum of their manners.”

«Their singular abstemiousness and temperance,” said Bracy, forgetting the plan which promised him a Saxon bride.

«Together with the courage and conduct,” said Brian de Bois - Guilbert, «by which they distinguished themselves at Hastings and elsewhere.”

While, with smooth and smiling cheek, the courtiers, each in turn, followed their Prince's example, and aimed a shaft of ridicule at Cedric, the face of the Saxon became inflamed with passion, and he glanced his eyes fiercely from one to another, as if the quick succession of so many injuries had prevented his replying to them in turn; or, like a baited bull, who, surrounded by his tormentors, is at a loss to choose from



among them the immediate object of his revenge. At length he spoke, with a voice half choked with passion; and, addressing himself to Prince John as the head and front of the offence which he had received, «Whatever,” he said, «have been the follies and vices of our race, a Saxon would have been held *nidering*,\* (the most emphatic term for abject worthlessness,) who should, in his own hall, and while his own wine-cup passed, have treated an unoffending guest as your highness has this day beheld me used; and whatever was the misfortune of our fathers on the field of Hastings, those may at least be silent,” here he looked at Front-de-Bœuf and the Templar, «who have within these few hours once and again lost saddle and stirrup before the lance of a Saxon.”

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\* There was nothing accounted so ignominious among the Saxons as to merit this disgraceful epithet. Even William the Conqueror, hated as he was by them, continued to draw a considerable army of Anglo-Saxons to his standard, by threatening to stigmatize those that staid at home as *Nidering*. Bartholinus, I think, mentions a similar phrase which had like influence on the Danes.



“By my faith, a biting jest,” said Prince John. “How like you it, sirs? — Our Saxon subjects rise in spirit and courage; become shrewd in wit, and bold in bearing, in these unsettled times — What say ye, my lords? — By this good light, I hold it best to take our galleys, and return to Normandy in time.”

“For fear of the Saxons?” said Bracy, laughing; “we should need no weapon but our hunting spears to bring these boars to bay.”

“A truce with your raillery, Sir Knights,” said Fitzurse; “and it were well,” he added, addressing the Prince, “that your highness should assure the worthy Cedric there is no insult intended him by jests which must sound but harshly in the ears of a stranger.”

“Insult?” answered Prince John, resuming his courtesy of demeanour; “I trust it will not be thought that I could mean, or permit any, to be offered in my presence. Here! I fill my cup to Cedric himself, since he refuses to pledge his son’s health.”

The cup went round amid the well-dissembled applause of the courtiers, which, however, failed to make the impression on the mind of the Saxon which had been designed. He was not naturally acute of perception, but those too much undervalued his understanding who deemed that this flattering compliment would obliterate his sense



of the prior insult. He was silent, however, when the royal pledge again passed round, "To Sir Athelstane of Conningsburgh."

The knight made his obeisance, and shewed his sense of the honour by draining a huge goblet in answer to it.

"And now, sirs," said Prince John, who began to be warmed with the wine which he had drank, "having done justice to our Saxon guests, we will pray of them some requital to our courtesy. Worthy Thane," he continued, addressing Cedric, "may we pray you to name to us some Norman whose name may least sully your mouth, and to wash down with a goblet of wine all bitterness which the sound may leave behind it?"

Fitzurse arose while Prince John spoke, and, gliding behind the seat of the Saxon, whispered to him not to omit the opportunity of putting an end to unkindness betwixt the two races, by naming Prince John. The Saxon replied not to this politic insinuation, but, rising up, and filling his cup to the brim, he addressed Prince John in these words: "Your highness has required that I should name a Norman deserving to be remembered at our banquet. This, perchance, is a hard task, since it calls on the slave to sing the praises of the master — upon the vanquished, while pressed by all the evils of conquest, to sing the praises of the conqueror. Yet I *will* name a



Norman — the first in arms and in place — the best and the noblest of his race. And the lips that shall refuse to pledge me to his well-earned fame, I term false and dishonoured, and will so maintain them with my life. — I quaff this goblet to the health of Richard the Lion-hearted!”

Prince John, who had expected that his own name would have closed the Saxon's speech, started when that of his injured brother was so unexpectedly introduced. He raised mechanically the wine-cup to his lips, then instantly set it down, to view the demeanour of the company at this unexpected proposal, which many of them felt it as unsafe to oppose as to comply with. Some of them, ancient and experienced courtiers, closely imitated the example of the Prince himself, raising the goblet to their lips, and again replacing it before them. There were many who, with a more generous feeling, exclaimed, “Long live King Richard! and may he be speedily restored to us!” And some few, among whom were Front-de-Bœuf and the Templar, in sullen disdain suffered their goblets to stand untasted before them. But no man ventured directly to gainsay a pledge filled to the health of the reigning monarch.

Having enjoyed his triumph for about a minute, Cedric said to his companion, “Up, noble Athelstane! we have remained here long enough, since we have requited the hospitable courtesy of Prince



John's banquet. Those who wish to know further of our rude Saxon manners must henceforth seek us in the homes of our fathers, since we have seen enough of royal banquets, and enough of Norman courtesy."

So saying, he arose and left the banquetting room, followed by Athelstane, and by several other guests, who, partaking of the Saxon lineage, held themselves insulted by the sarcasms of Prince John and his courtiers.

"By the bones of St Thomas," said Prince John, as they retreated, "the Saxon churls have borne off the best of the day, and have retreated with triumph."

"*Conclamatum est, poculatum est,*" said Prior Aymer; "we have drunk and we have shouted, — it were time we left our wine flagons."

"The monk hath some fair penitent to shrive to-night, that he is in such a hurry to depart," said De Bracy.

"Not so, Sir Knight," replied the Abbot; "but I must move several miles forward this evening upon my homeward journey."

"They are breaking up," said the Prince in a whisper to Fitzurse; "their fears anticipate the event, and this coward Prior is the first to shrink from me."

"Fear not, my lord," said Waldemar; "I will shew him such reasons as shall induce him



to join us to hold our meeting at York. — Sir Prior," he said, "I must speak with you in private, before you mount your palfrey."

The other guests were now fast dispersing, with the exception of those immediately attached to Prince John's faction, and his retinue.

"This, then, is the result of your advice," said the Prince, turning an angry countenance upon Fitzurse; "that I should be bearded at my own board by a drunken Saxon churl, and that, on the mere sound of my brother's name, men should fall off from me as if I had the leprosy."

"Have patience, sir," replied his counsellor; "I might retort your accusation, and blame the inconsiderate levity which foiled my design, and misled your own better judgment. But this is no time for recrimination. Bracy and I will instantly go among these cowards, and convince them they have gone too far to recede."

"It will be in vain," said Prince John, pacing the apartment with disordered steps, and expressing himself with an agitation to which the wine he had drunk partly contributed — "It will be in vain — they have seen the hand-writing on the wall — they have marked the paw of the lion in the sand — they have heard his approaching roar shake the wood — nothing will re-animate their courage."



**"Would to God,"** said Fitzurse to Bracy, **"that aught could re-animate his own! His brother's very name is an ague to him. Unhappy are the counsellors of a Prince, who wants fortitude and perseverance alike in good and in evil."**







those which they at present enjoyed. To the young and wild nobles, he held out the prospect of unpunished licence and uncontrouled revelry; to the ambitious, that of power, and to the covetous, that of increased wealth and extended domains. The leaders of the mercenaries received a donation in gold; an argument the most persuasive to their minds, and without which all others would have proved in vain. Promises were still more liberally distributed than money by this active agent; and, in fine, nothing was left undone that could determine the wavering, or animate the disheartened. The return of King Richard he spoke of as an event altogether beyond the reach of probability; yet, when he observed, from the doubtful looks and uncertain answers which he received, that this was the apprehension by which the minds of his accomplices were most haunted, he boldly treated that event, should it really take place, as one which ought not to alter their political calculations.

“If Richard returns,” said Fitzurse, “he returns to enrich his needy and impoverished crusaders at the expence of those who did not follow him to the Holy Land. He returns to call to a fearful accounting, those who, during his absence, have done aught that can be construed offence or encroachment upon either the laws of the land or the privileges of the crown. He returns



to advenge upon the Orders of the Temple and the Hospital, the preference which they shewed to Philip of France during the wars in the Holy Land. He returns, in fine, to punish as a rebel every adherent of his brother Prince John. Are ye afraid of his power?" continued the artful confidant of that prince; "we acknowledge him a strong and valiant knight, but these are not the days of King Arthur, when a champion could encounter an army. If Richard indeed comes back, it must be alone, — unfollowed — unfriended. The bones of his gallant army have whitened the sands of Palestine. The few of his followers who have returned, have straggled hither like this Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, beggared and broken men. And what talk ye of Richard's right of birth?" he continued, in answer to those who objected scruples on that head. "Is Richard's title of primogeniture more decidedly certain than that of Duke Robert of Normandy, the conqueror's eldest son? And yet William the Red, and Henry, his second and third brothers, were successively preferred to him by the voice of the nation. Robert had every merit which can be pleaded for Richard; he was a bold knight, a good leader, generous to his friends and to the church, and, to crown the whole, a crusador and a conqueror of the Holy Sepulchre; and yet he died a blind and



miserable prisoner in the Castle of Cardiffe, because he opposed himself to the will of the people, who chose not that he should rule over them. It is our right," he said, "to choose from the blood royal the prince who is best qualified to hold the supreme power — that is," said he, correcting himself, "him whose election will best promote the interests of the nobility. In personal qualifications," he said, "it was possible that Prince John might be inferior to his brother Richard; but when it was considered that the latter returned with the sword of vengeance in his hands, while the former held out rewards, immunities, privileges, wealth and honours, it could not be doubted which was the king whom in wisdom the nobility were called on to support."

These, and many more arguments, some adapted to the peculiar circumstances of those whom he addressed, had the expected weight with the nobles of Prince John's faction. Most of them consented to attend upon the proposed meeting at York, for the purpose of making general arrangements for placing the crown upon the head of Prince John.

It was late at night, when, worn out and exhausted with his various exertions, however gratified with the result, Fitzurse, returning to the Castle of Ashby, met with De Bracy, who had



exchanged his banqueting garments for a short green kirtle, with hose of the same cloth and colour, a leathern cap or head-piece, a short sword, a horn slung over his shoulder, a long bow in his hand, and a bundle of arrows stuck into his belt. Had Fitzurse met this figure in an outer apartment, he would have passed him without notice, as one of the yeomen of the guard; but finding him in the inner-hall, he looked at him with more attention, and recognized the Norman knight in the dress of an English yeoman.

“What mummary is this, De Bracy?” said Fitzurse, somewhat angrily; “is this a time for Christmas gambols and quaint maskings, when the fate of our master, Prince John, is on the very verge of decision? Why hast thou not been, like me, among these heartless cravens, whom the very name of King Richard terrifies, as it is said to do the children of the Saracens?”

“I have been minding mine own business,” said De Bracy calmly, “as you, Fitzurse.”

“I minding mine own business!” echoed Waldemar; “I have been engaged in that of Prince John, our joint patron.”

“As if thou hadst any other reason for that, Waldemar,” said De Bracy, “than the promotion of thine own individual interest. Come, Fitzurse, we know each other — ambition is thy pursuit, pleasure is mine, and they become our



different ages. Of Prince John thou thinkest as I do; that he is too weak to be a determined monarch, too tyrannical to be an easy monarch, too insolent and presumptuous to be a popular monarch, and too fickle and timid to be long a monarch of any kind. But he is a monarch by whom Fitzurse and Bracy hope to rise and thrive; and therefore you aid him with your policy, and I with the lances of my Free Companions."

"A hopeful auxiliary," said Fitzurse impatiently; "playing the fool in the very moment of utter necessity. — What on earth dost thou purpose by this absurd disguise at a moment so urgent?"

"To get me a wife," answered Bracy coolly, "after the manner of the tribe of Benjamin."

"The tribe of Benjamin?" said Fitzurse, "I comprehend thee not."

"Wert thou not in presence yester-even" said De Bracy, "when we heard the Prior Aymer tell us a tale, in reply to the romance which was sung by the Minstrel? — He told how, long since in Palestine, a deadly feud arose between the clan of Benjamin and the rest of the Israelitish nation; and how they cut to pieces well nigh all the chivalry of that clan; and how they swore by our Blessed Lady that they would not permit those who remained to marry in their lineage; and how they became grieved for their vow, and sent to



consult his holiness the Pope how they might be absolved from it; and how, by the advice of the Holy Father, the youth of the tribe of Benjamin carried off from a superb tournament all the ladies who were there present, and thus won them wives without the consent either of their brides or their brides' families."

"I have heard the story," said Fitzurse, "though either the Prior or thou hast made some singular alterations in date and circumstances."

"I tell thee," said De Bracy, "that I mean to purvey me a wife after the fashion of the tribe of Benjamin; which is as much as to say, that in this same equipment I will fall upon that herd of Saxon bullocks, who have this night left the castle, and carry off from them the lovely Rowena."

"Art thou mad, De Bracy?" said Fitzurse. "Bethink thee that, though the men be Saxons, they are rich and powerful, and regarded with the more respect by their countrymen, that wealth and honour are but the lot of few of Saxon descent."

"And should belong to none," said De Bracy; "the work of the Conquest should be completed."

"This is no time for it at least," said Fitzurse; "the approaching crisis renders the favour of the multitude indispensable, and Prince John can-



not refuse justice to any one who injures their favourites."

"Let him grant it if he dare," said De Bracy; "he will soon see the difference betwixt the support of such a lusty lot of spears as mine, and that of a heartless mob of Saxon churls. Yet I mean no immediate discovery of myself. Seem I not in this garb as bold a forester as ever blew horn? The blame of the violence shall rest with the outlaws of the Yorkshire forests. I have sure spies on the Saxons' motions — To-night they sleep in the convent of Saint Wittol, or Withold, or whatever they call that churl of a Saxon saint, at Burton-on-Trent. Next day's march brings them within our reach, and falcon-ways we swoop on them at once. Presently after I will appear in mine own shape, play the courteous knight, rescue the unfortunate and afflicted fair one from the hands of the rude ravishers, conduct her to Front-de-Bœuf's castle, or to Normandy, if it should be necessary, and produce her not again to her kindred until she be the bride and dame of Maurice de Bracy."

"A marvellously sage plan," said Fitzurse, "and, as I think, not entirely of thine own device—Come, be frank, De Bracy; who aided thee in the invention? and who is to assist in the execution? for, as I think, thine own band lies as far off as York."



“Marry, if thou must needs know,” said De Bracy, “it was the Templar Brian De Bois-Guilbert that shaped out the enterprize which the adventure of the men of Benjamin suggested to me. He is to aid me in the onslaught, and he and his followers will personate the outlaws, from whom my valorous arm is, after changing my garb, to rescue the lady.”

“By my halidome,” said Fitzurse, “the plan was worthy of your united wisdom; and thy prudence, De Bracy, is most especially manifested in thy project of leaving the lady in the hands of thy worthy confederate. Thou may’st, I think, succeed in taking her from her Saxon friends, but how thou wilt rescue her afterwards from the clutches of Bois-Guilbert seems considerably more doubtful — He is a falcon well accustomed to pounce on a partridge, and to hold his prey fast.”

“He is a Templar,” said De Bracy, “and cannot therefore rival me in my plan of wedding this heiress; — and to attempt aught dishonourable against the intended bride of De Bracy — By Heaven! were he a whole Chapter of his Order in his single person, he dared not do me such an injury!”

“Then since nought that I can say,” said Fitzurse, “will put this folly from thy imagination (for well I know the obstinacy of thy disposition),



at least waste as little time as possible — let not thy folly be lasting as well as untimely.”

“I tell thee,” answered De Bracy, “that it will be the work of a few hours, and I shall be at York at the head of my bold and valorous fellows, as ready to support any daring design as thy policy can be to form one — But I hear my comrades assembling, and the steeds stamping and neighing in the outer-court — Farewell. — I go, like a true knight, to win the smiles of beauty.” —

“Like a true knight?” repeated Fitzurse, looking after him; “like a natural fool, I should say, or like a child, who will leave the most serious and needful occupation, to chase the down of the thistle that drives past him — But it is with such tools that I must work, and for whose advantage? — for that of a Prince as unwise as he is profligate, and as likely to be an ungrateful master as he has already proved a rebellious son and an unnatural brother. — But he — he, too, is but one of the tools with whom I labour; and, proud as he is, should he presume to separate his interest from mine, this is a secret which he shall soon learn.”

The meditations of the statesman were here interrupted by the voice of the Prince from an interior apartment, calling out, “Noble Walde-



mar Fitzurse!" and, with bonnet doffed, the future Chancellor, for to such high preferment did the hopes of the wily Norman aspire, hastened to receive the orders of the future sovereign.



## CHAPTER XVI.

*Far in a wild, unknown to public view,  
From youth to age a reverend hermit grew;  
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,  
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well;  
Remote from man, with God he pass'd his days,  
Prayer all his business — his pleasure praise.*

*Parnell.*

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**T**HE reader cannot have forgotten that the event of the tournament was decided by the exertions of an unknown knight, whom, on account of the passive and indifferent conduct which he had manifested on the former part of the day, the spectators had entitled *Le Noir Faineant*. This knight had left the field abruptly when the victory was achieved; and when he was called upon to receive the reward of his valour, he was no where to be found. In the meantime, while



summoned by heralds and by trumpets, the knight was holding his course northward, avoiding all frequented paths, and taking the shortest course through the woodlands. He paused for the night at a small hostelry lying out of the ordinary route, where, however, he obtained from a wandering minstrel news of the event of the tourney.

On the next morning the knight departed early, with the purpose of making a long journey; the condition of his horse, which he had carefully spared during the preceding morning, being such as enabled him to travel far without the necessity of much repose. Yet his purpose was baffled by the devious paths through which he rode, so that when evening closed upon him, he only found himself on the frontiers of the West Riding of Yorkshire. By this time both horse and man required refreshment, and it became necessary moreover to look out for some place in which they might spend the night, which was now fast approaching.

The place where the traveller found himself seemed unpropitious for finding either shelter or refreshment, and he was likely to be reduced to the usual expedient of knights errant, who, on such occasions, turned their horses to graze, and laid themselves down to meditate on their lady-mistress, with an oak-tree for a canopy. But the



Black Knight either had no mistress to meditate upon, or, as indifferent in love as he seemed to be in war, was not sufficiently occupied by passionate reflections upon her beauty and cruelty, to be able to parry the effects of fatigue and hunger, and suffer love to act as a substitute for the solid comforts of a bed and supper. He felt dissatisfied, therefore, when, looking around, he found himself deeply involved in woods, through which indeed there were many open glades, and some paths, but such as seemed only formed by the numerous herds of cattle which grazed in the forest, or by the animals of chace and the hunters who made prey of them.

The sun, by which the knight had chiefly directed his course, was now sunk behind the Derbyshire hills on his left, and every effort which he might make to pursue his journey was as likely to lead him out of his road as to advance him on his journey. After having in vain endeavoured to select the most beaten path, in hopes it might lead to the cottage of some herdsman, or the sylvan lodge of some forester, and having repeatedly found himself totally unable to determine on a choice, the knight resolved to trust to the sagacity of his horse; experience having, on former occasions, made him acquainted with the wonderful talent possessed by these animals for extricating themselves and their riders upon such emergencies.



The good horse, grievously fatigued with so long a day's journey under a rider cased in mail, had no sooner found, by the slackened reins, that he was abandoned to his own guidance, than he seemed to assume new strength and spirit; and whereas formerly he had scarce replied to the spur, otherwise than by a groan, he now, as if proud of the confidence reposed in him, pricked up his ears, and assumed of his own accord a more lively motion. The path which the animal adopted rather turned off from the course pursued by the knight during the day; but, as the horse seemed confident in his choice, the rider abandoned himself to his discretion.

He was justified by the event; for the footpath soon after appeared a little wider and more worn, and the tinkle of a small bell gave the knight to understand that he was in the vicinity of some chapel or hermitage.

Accordingly, he soon reached an open plat of turf, on the opposite side of which a rock, rising abruptly from a gently sloping plain, offered its grey and weather-beaten front to the traveller. Ivy mantled its sides in some places, and in others oaks and hollow bushes, whose roots found nourishment in the cliffs of the crag, waved over the precipice below, like the plumage of the warrior over his steel helmet, giving grace to that whose chief expression was terror. At the bot-



tom of the rock, and leaning as it were against it, was constructed a rude hut, built chiefly of the trunks of trees felled in the neighbouring forest, and secured against the weather by having its crevices stuffed with moss mingled with clay. The stem of a young fir-tree, lopped of its branches, with a piece of wood tied across near the top, was planted upright near the door, as a rude emblem of the holy cross. At a little distance on the right hand, a fountain of the purest water trickled out of the rock, and was received in a hollow stone, which labour had formed into a rustic basin. Escaping from thence, the stream murmured down the descent by a channel which its course had long worn, and so wandered through the little plain to lose itself in the neighbouring wood.

Beside this fountain were the ruins of a very small chapel, of which the roof had partly fallen in. The building when entire, had never been above sixteen feet long by twelve feet in breadth, and the roof, low in proportion, rested upon four concentric arches which sprung from the four corners of the building, each supported upon a short and heavy pillar. The ribs of two of these arches remained, though the roof had fallen down betwixt them; over the others it remained entire. The entrance to this ancient place of devotion was under a very low round arch,



ornamented by several courses of that zig-zag moulding, resembling shark's teeth, which appears so often in the more ancient Saxon churches. A belfry rose above the porch on four small pillars, within which hung the green and weather-beaten bell, the feeble sounds of which had been sometime since heard by the Black Knight.

The whole peaceful and quiet scene lay glimmering in twilight before the eyes of the traveller, giving him good assurance of lodging for the night; since it was a special duty of those hermits who dwelt in the woods, to exercise hospitality towards benighted or bewildered passengers.

Accordingly, the knight took no time to consider minutely the particulars which we have detailed, but thanking Saint Julian (the patron of travellers) who had sent him good harbourage, he leaped from his horse and assailed the door of the hermitage with the butt of his lance, in order to arouse attention and gain admittance.

It was some time before he obtained any answer, and the reply, when made, was unpropitious.

“Pass on, whosoever thou art,” was the answer given by a deep hoarse voice from within the hut, “and disturb not the servant of God and St Dunstan in his evening devotions.”

“Worthy father,” answered the knight, “here is a poor wanderer bewildered in these woods,



who gives thee the opportunity of exercising your charity and hospitality."

"Good brother," replied the inhabitant of the hermitage, "it has pleased Our Lady and St Dunstan to destine me for the object of those virtues, instead of the exercise thereof. I have no provisions here which even a dog would share with me, and a horse of any tenderness of nurture would despise my couch — pass therefore on thy way, and God speed thee."

"But how," replied the knight, "is it possible for me to find my way through such a wood as this, when darkness is coming on? I pray you, reverend father, as you are a Christian, to undo your door, and at least point out to me my road."

"And I pray you, good Christian brother," replied the anchorite, "to disturb me no more. You have already interrupted one *pater*, two *aves*, and a *credo*. which I, miserable sinner that I am, should, according to my vow, have said before moonrise."

"The road! — the road!" vociferated the knight, "if I am to expect no more from thee."

"The road," replied the hermit, "is easy to hit. The path from the wood leads to a morass, and from thence to a ford, which, as the rains have abated, may now be passable. When thou hast crossed the ford, thou wilt take care of thy



footing up the left bank, as it is somewhat precipitous; and the path, which hangs over the river, has lately, as I learn, (for I seldom leave the duties of my chapel,) given way in sundry places. Thou wilt then keep straight forward" —

"A broken path — a precipice — a ford, and a morass!" said the knight, interrupting him, — "Sir Hermit, if you were the holiest that ever wore beard or told bead, you shall scarce prevail on me to hold this road to-night. I tell thee, that thou, who livest by the charity of the country — ill deserved, as I doubt it is — hast no right to refuse shelter to the wayfarer when in distress. Either open the door quickly, or, by the rood, I will beat it down, and make entry for myself."

"Friend wayfarer," replied the hermit, "be not importunate; if thou puttest me to use the carnal weapon in mine own defence, it will be e'en the worse for you."

At this moment a distant noise of barking and growling, which the traveller had for some time heard, became extremely loud and furious, and made the knight suppose that the hermit, alarmed by his threat of making forcible entry, had called the dogs who made this clamour to aid him in his defence, out of some distant recess in which they had been kennelled. Incensed at this preparation on the hermit's part for making good his inhospitable purpose, the knight struck the



door so furiously with his foot, that posts as well as staples shook with violence.

The anchorite, not caring again to expose his door to a similar shock, now called out aloud, "Patience, patience — spare thy strength, good traveller, and I will presently undo the door, though, it may be, my doing so will be little to thy pleasure."

The door accordingly was opened; and the hermit, a large, strong-built man, in his sackcloth gown and hood, girt with a rope of rushes, stood before the knight. He had in one hand a lighted torch, or link, and in the other a baton of crab-tree, so thick and heavy, that it might well be termed a club. Two large shaggy dogs, half greyhound, half mastiff, stood ready to rush upon the traveller, so soon as the door should be opened. But when the torch glanced upon the armour of the knight, who stood without, the hermit, altering probably his original intentions, repressed the rage of his auxiliaries, and, changing his tone to a sort of churlish courtesy, invited the knight to enter his lodge, making excuse for his unwillingness to open his lodge after sun-set, by alleging the multitude of robbers and outlaws who were abroad, and who gave no honour to our Lady or St Dunstan, nor to those holy men who spent life in their service.



“The poverty of your cell, good father,” said the knight, looking around him, and seeing nothing but a bed of leaves, a crucifix rudely carved in oak, a missal, with a rough-hewn table and two stools, and one or two clumsy articles of furniture — “the poverty of your cell should seem a sufficient defence against any risk of thieves, not to mention the aid of two trusty dogs, large and strong enough, I think, to pull down a stag, and, of course, to match with most men.”

“The good keeper of the forest,” said the hermit, “hath allowed me the use of these animals, to protect my solitude until the times shall mend.”

Having said this, he fixed his torch in a twisted branch of iron which served for a candlestick; and placing the oaken trivet before the embers of the fire, which he refreshed with some dry wood, he placed a stool upon one side of the table, and beckoned to the knight to do the same upon the other.

They sat down, and gazed with great gravity at each other; each thinking in his heart that he had seldom seen a stronger or more athletic figure than was placed opposite to him.

“Reverend hermit,” said the knight, after looking long and fixedly at his host, “were it not to interrupt your devout meditations, I would pray to know three things of your holiness; first, where I am to put my horse? — secondly, what



I can have for supper? — thirdly, where I am to take up my couch for the night?"

"I will reply to you," said the hermit, "with my finger, it being against my rule to speak by words where signs can answer the purpose." So saying, he pointed successively to two corners of the hut. "Your stable," said he, "is there — your bed there;" and, reaching down a platter with two handfuls of parched pease upon it from the neighbouring shelf, and placing it upon the table, he added, "your supper is there."

The knight shrugged his shoulders, and leaving the hut, brought in his horse, (which in the interim he had fastened to a tree,) unsaddled him with much attention, and spread upon the steed's weary back his own mantle.

The hermit was apparently somewhat moved to compassion by the anxiety as well as address which the stranger displayed in tending his horse; for, muttering something about provender left for the keeper's palfrey, he dragged out of a recess a bundle of forage, which he spread before the knight's charger, and immediately afterwards shook down a quantity of dried fern in the corner which he had assigned for the rider's couch. The knight returned him thanks for his courtesy; and, this duty done, both resumed their seats by the table, whereon stood the trencher of pease placed between them. The hermit, after a long grace,



which had once been Latin, but of which original language few traces remained, excepting here and there the long rolling termination of some word or phrase, set example to his guest, by modestly putting into a very large mouth, furnished with teeth which might have ranked with those of a boar both in sharpness and whiteness, some three or four dried pease, — a miserable grist as it seemed for so large and able a mill.

The knight, in order to follow so laudable an example, laid aside his helmet, his corslet, and the greater part of his armour, and showed to the hermit a head thick-curved with yellow hair, high features, blue eyes, remarkably bright and sparkling, a mouth well formed, having an upper lip clothed with mustachios darker than his hair and bearing altogether the look of a bold, daring, and enterprising man, with which his strong form, well corresponded.

The hermit, as if wishing to answer to the confidence of his guest, threw back his cowl, and shewed a round bullet-head belonging to a man in the prime of life. His close-shaven crown, surrounded by a circle of stiff curled black hair, had something the appearance of a parish pin-fold begirt by its high hedge. The features expressed nothing of monastic austerity, or of ascetic privations; on the contrary, it was a bold bluff countenance, with broad black eye-brows, a well-



turned forehead, and cheeks as round and vermillion as those of a trumpeter, from which descended a long and curly black beard. Such a visage, joined to the brawny form of the holy man, spoke rather of sirloins and haunches, than of peas and pulse. This incongruity did not escape the guest. After he had with great difficulty accomplished the mastication of a mouthful of the dried peas, he found it absolutely necessary to request his pious entertainer to furnish him with some liquor; who replied to his request by placing before him a large cann of the purest water from the fountain.

“It is from the well of St Dunstan,” said he, “in which, betwixt sun and sun, he baptized five hundred heathen Danes and Britons — blessed be his name!” And applying his black beard to the pitcher, he took a draught much more moderate in quantity than his encomium seemed to warrant.

“It seems to me, reverend father,” said the knight, “that the small morsels which you eat, together with this holy, but somewhat thin beverage, have thriven with you marvellously. You appear a man more fit to win the ram at a wrestling match, or the ring at a bout at quarter-staff, or the bucklers at a sword-play, than to linger out your time in this desolate wilderness, saying masses, and living upon parched peas and cold water.”



“Sir Knight,” answered the hermit, “your thoughts, like those of the ignorant laity, are according to the flesh. It has pleased Our Lady and my patron saint to bless the pittance to which I restrain myself, even as the pulse and water was blessed to the children Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, who drank the same rather than defile themselves with the wine and meats which were appointed them by the King of the Saracens.”

“Holy father,” said the knight, “upon whose countenance it hath pleased Heaven to work such a miracle, permit a sinful layman to crave thy name?”

“Thou may’st call me,” answered the hermit, “the Clerk of Copmannhurst, for so am I termed in these parts — They add, it is true, the epithet holy, but I stand not upon that, as being unworthy of such addition. — And now, valiant knight, may I pray ye for the name of my honourable guest?”

“Truly,” said the knight, “Holy Clerk of Copmannhurst, men call me in these parts the Black Knight, — many, sir, add to it the epithet of Sluggard, whereby I am no way ambitious to be distinguished.”

The hermit could scarcely forbear from smiling at his guest’s reply.



“I see,” said he, „Sir Sluggish Knight, that thou art a man of prudence and of counsel; and moreover, I see that my poor monastic fare likes thee not, accustomed, perhaps, as thou hast been, to the licence of courts and of camps, and the luxuries of cities; and now I bethink me, Sir Sluggard, that when the charitable keeper of this forest-walk left these dogs for my protection, and also those bundles of forage, he left me also some food, which, being unfit for my use, the very recollection of it had escaped me amid my more weighty meditations.”

“I dare be sworn he did so,” said the knight; “I was convinced that there was better food in the cell, Holy Clerk, since you first doffed your cowl.—Your keeper is ever a jovial fellow; and none who beheld thy grinders contending with these peas, and thy throat flooded with this ungenial element, could see thee doomed to such horse-provender and horse-beverage,” (pointing to the provisions upon the table,) “and refrain from mending thy cheer. — Let us see the keeper’s bounty therefore without delay.”

The hermit cast a wistful look upon the knight, in which there was a sort of comic expression of hesitation, as if uncertain how far he should act prudently in trusting his guest. There was, however, as much of bold frankness in the knight’s countenance as was possible to be ex-



pressed by features. His smile, too, had something in it irresistibly comic, and gave an assurance of faith and loyalty, with which his host could not refrain from sympathising.

After exchanging a mute glance or two, the hermit went to the further side of the hut, and opened a hatch, which was concealed with great care and some ingenuity. Out of the recesses of a dark closet, into which this aperture gave admittance, he brought a large pasty, baked in a pewter platter of unusual dimensions. This mighty dish he placed before his guest, who, using his poniard to cut it open, lost no time in making himself acquainted with its contents.

"How long is it since the good keeper has been here?" said the knight to his host, after having swallowed several hasty morsels of this reinforcement to the hermit's good cheer.

"About two months," answered the father hastily.

"By the true Lord," answered the knight, "every thing in your hermitage is miraculous, Holy Clerk; for I would have been sworn that the fat buck which furnished this venison had been running on foot within the week."

The hermit was somewhat discountenanced by this observation; and, moreover, he made but a poor figure while gazing on the diminution of the



pasty, on which his guest was making desperate inroads; a warfare in which his previous professions of abstinence left him no pretext for joining.

“I have been in Palestine, Sir Clerk,” said the knight, stopping short of a sudden, “and I bethink me it is a custom there that every host who entertains a guest shall assure him of the wholesomeness of his food, by partaking of it along with him. Far be it from me to suspect so holy a man of aught inhospitable; nevertheless I will be highly bound to you would you comply with this eastern custom.”

“To ease your unnecessary scruples, Sir Knight, I will for once depart from my rule,” replied the hermit. And as there were no forks in these days, his clutches were instantly in the bowels of the pasty.

The ice of ceremony being once broken, it seemed matter of rivalry between the guest and the entertainer which should display the best appetite; and although the former had probably fasted longest, yet the hermit fairly surpassed him.

“Holy Clerk,” said the knight, when his hunger was appeased, “I would gage my good horse yonder against a zecchin, that that same honest keeper to whom we are obliged for the venison has left thee a stoup of wine, or a runlet of canary, or some such trifle, by way of ally to this noble



pasty. This would be a circumstance, doubtless, totally unworthy to dwell in the memory of so rigid an anchorite; yet, I think, were you to search yonder crypt once more, you would find that I am right in my conjecture."

The hermit only replied by a grin; and, returning to the hutch, he produced a leathern bottle, which might contain about four quarts. He also brought forth two large drinking cups, made out of the horn of the urus, and hooped with silver. Having made this goodly provision for washing down the supper, he seemed to think no further ceremonious scruple necessary on his part; but, filling both cups, and saying, in the Saxon fashion, "*Waes hael*, Sir Sluggish Knight!" he emptied his own at a draught.

"*Drink hael!* Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst," answered the warrior, and did his host reason in a similar brimmer.

"Holy Clerk," said the stranger, after the first cup was thus swallowed, "I cannot but marvel that a man, possessed of such thews and sinews as thine, and who therewithal shews the talents of so goodly a trencher-man, should think of abiding by himself in this wilderness. In my judgment, you are fitter to keep a castle or a fort, eating of the fat and drinking of the strong, than to live here upon pulse and water, or even upon



the charity of the keeper. At least, were I as thou, I should find myself both disport and plenty out of the king's deer. There is many a goodly herd in these forests, and a buck will never be missed that goes to the use of Saint Dunstan's chaplain."

"Sir Sluggish Knight," replied the Clerk, "these are dangerous words, and I pray you to forbear them. I am true hermit to the king and law, and were I to spoil my liege's game, I should be sure of the prison, and, an my gown saved me not, were in some peril of hanging."

"Nevertheless, were I as thou," said the knight, "I would take my walk by moonlight, when foresters and keepers were warm in bed, and ever and anon, — as I pattered my prayers, — I would let fly a shaft among the herds of dun deer that feed in the glades — Resolve me, Holy Clerk, hast thou never practised such a pastime?"

"Friend Sluggard," answered the hermit, "thou hast seen all that can concern thee of my housekeeping, and something more than he deserves who takes up his quarters by violence. Credit me, it is better to enjoy the good which God sends thee, than to be impertinently curious how it comes. Fill thy cup, and welcome; and do not, I pray thee, by further impertinent enquiries, put me to shew that thou couldst hardly



have made good thy lodging had I been earnest to oppose thee."

"By my faith," said the knight, "thou makest me more curious than ever! Thou art the most mysterious hermit I ever met; and I will know more of thee ere we part. At for thy threats, know, holy man, thou speakest to one whose trade it is to find out danger wherever it is to be met with."

"Sir Sluggish Knight, I drink to thee," said the hermit; "respecting thy valour much, but deeming wondrous slightly of thy discretion. If thou wilt take equal arms with me, I will give thee, in all friendship and brotherly love, such sufficing penance and complete absolution, that thou shalt not for the next twelve months sin the sin of excess of curiosity."

The knight pledged him, and desired him to name his weapons.

"There is none," replied the hermit, "from the scissars of Dalilah and the tempenny nail of Jael, to the scymitar of Goliath, at which I am not a match for thee — But, if I am to make the election, what say'st thou, good friend, to these trinkets?"

Thus speaking, he opened another hutch, and took out from it a couple of broad-swords and



bucklers, such as were used by the yeomanry of the period. The knight, who watched his motions, observed that this second place of concealment was furnished with two or three good long bows, a cross bow, a bundle of bolts for the former, and half-a-dozen sheaves of arrows for the latter. A harp, and other matters of a very uncanonical appearance, were also visible when this dark recess was opened.

"I promise thee, brother Clerk," said he, "I will ask thee no more offensive questions. The contents of that cupboard are an answer to all my enquiries; and I see a weapon there (here he stooped and took out the harp) on which I would more gladly prove my skill with thee, than at the sword and buckler."

"I hope, Sir Knight," said the hermit, "thou hast given no good reason for thy surname of the Sluggard. I do promise thee I suspect thee grievously. Nevertheless, thou art my guest, and I will not put thy manhood to the proof without thine own free will. Sit thee down, then, and fill thy cup; let us drink, sing, and be merry. If thou knowest ever a good lay, thou shalt be welcome to a nook of pasty at Copmanhurst so long as I serve the chapel of St Dunstan, which, please God, shall be till I change my grey covering for one of green turf. — But come, fill a flagon, for



it will crave some time to tune the harp; and nought pitches the voice and sharpens the ear like a stoup of wine. For my part, I love to feel the grape at my very finger-ends before they make the harp-strings tinkle."

I promise thee, Brother Clerk, said he, I will ask thee no more offensive questions. The contents of that cupboard are an answer to all my enquiries; and I see a weapon there (here he pointed and took out the harp) on which I would most gladly prove my skill with thee, than at the sword and buckler.

I hope, Sir Knight, said the hermit, that thou wilt give me good reason for thy retaining of the sword. I do promise thee I expect thee to give me a good answer, thou art my guest, and I will not put thy manhood to the proof without giving thee time with all thee desire, then, and till thou art satisfied, sing, and be merry. If thou art not a good lay, thou shalt be welcome to a goodly party at Copmansham to keep us merry, the which of St Dunstan, which, I have heard, is the best change now very common for the good men, that come, till a thyme, for



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 CHAPTER XVII.

*At eve, within yon studious nook,  
 I ope my brass-embossed book,  
 Pourtray'd with many a holy deed  
 Of martyrs crown'd with heavenly meed;  
 Then, as my taper waxes dim,  
 Chaunt, ere I sleep, my measured hymn.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Who but would cast his pomp away,  
 To take my staff and amice gray,  
 And to the world's tumultuous stage,  
 Prefer the peaceful Hermitage.*

*Warton.*

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NOTWITHSTANDING the prescription of the genial hermit, with which his guest willingly complied, he found it no easy matter to bring the harp to harmony.

“Methinks, holy father,” said he, “the instrument wants one string, and the rest have been somewhat misused.”



“Ay, mark’st thou that?” replied the hermit; “that shews thee a master of the craft. Wine and wassel,” he added, gravely, casting up his eyes — “all the fault of wine and wassel! I told Allan-a-Dale, the northern minstrel, that he would damage the harp if he touched it after the seventh cup, but he would not be controuled — Friend, I drink to thy successful performance.”

So saying, he took off his cup with much gravity, at the same time shaking his head at the intemperance of the northern minstrel.

The knight, in the meantime, had brought the strings into some order, and after a short prelude, asked his host whether he would choose a *sirvente* in the language of *oc*, or a *lai* in the language of *oui*, or a *virelai*, or a ballad in the vulgar English.

“A ballad, a ballad,” said the hermit, “against all the *ocs* and *ouis* of France. Downright English am I, Sir Knight, and downright English was my patron St Dunstan, and scorned *oc* and *oui*, as he wold have scorned the parings of the devil’s hoof — downright English alone shall be sung in this cell.”

“I will assay then,” said the knight, “a ballad composed by a Saxon glee-man, whom I knew in Holy Land.”



It speedily appeared, that if the knight was not a complete master of the minstrel art, his taste for it had at least been cultivated under the best instructors. Art had taught him to soften the faults of a voice which had little compass, and was naturally rough, rather than mellow, and, in short, had done all that art can do in supplying natural deficiencies. His performance, therefore, might have been termed very respectable by abler judges than the hermit, especially as the knight threw into the notes now a degree of spirit, and now of plaintive enthusiasm, which gave force and energy to the verses which he sung

### THE CRUSADER'S RETURN.

High deeds atchieved of knightly fame,  
 From Palestine the champion came;  
 The cross upon his shoulders borne,  
 Battle and blast had dimm'd and torn,  
 Each dint upon his batter'd shield  
 Was token of a foughten field;  
 And thus, beneath his lady's bower,  
 He sung as fell the twilight hour:

LXIII.

G



## 2.

«Joy to the fair! — thy knight behold,  
 Return'd from yonder land of gold;  
 No wealth he brings, nor wealth can need,  
 Save his good arms and battle steed;  
 His spurs, to dash against a foe,  
 His lance and sword to lay him low;  
 Such all the trophies of his toil,  
 Such — and the hope of Tekla's smile!

## 3.

«Joy to the fair! whose constant knight  
 Her favour fired to feats of might;  
 Unnoted shall she not remain  
 Where meet the bright and noble train;  
 Minstrel shall sing and herald tell —  
 Mark yonder maid of beauty well,  
 'Tis she for whose bright eyes was won  
 The listed field at Ascalon!

## 4.

«Note well her smile! — it edged the blade  
 Which fifty wives to widows made,  
 When, vain his strength and Mahound's spell,  
 Iconium's turban'd soldan fell.  
 See'st thou her locks, whose sunny glow  
 Half shows, half shades, her neck of snow;  
 Twines not of them one golden thread,  
 But for its sake a Paynim bled.'



## 5.

“Joy to the fair! — my name unknown,  
Each deed, and all its praise, thine own;  
Then, oh! unbar this churlish gate,  
The night-dew falls, the hour is late.  
Inured to Syria’s glowing breath,  
I feel the north breeze chill as death;  
Let grateful love quell maiden shame,  
And grant him bliss who brings thee fame.”

During this performance, the hermit demeaned himself much like a first-rate critic of the present day at a new opera. He reclined back upon his seat, with his eyes half shut; now folding his hands and twisting his thumbs, he seemed absorbed in attention, and anon, balancing his expanded palms, he gently flourished them in time to the music. At one or two favourite cadences, he threw in a little assistance of his own, where the knight’s voice seemed unable to carry the air so high as his worshipful taste approved. When the song was ended, the anchorite emphatically declared it a good one, and well sung.

“And, yet,” said he, “I think my Saxon countryman had herded long enough with the Normans, to fall into the tone of their melancholy ditties. What took the honest knight from home? or what could he expect but to find his mistress



agreeably engaged with a rival on his return, and his serenade, as they call it, as little regarded as the caterwauling of a cat in the gutter? Nevertheless, Sir Knight, I drink this cup to thee, to the success of all true lovers — I fear you are none," he added, on observing that the knight (whose brain began to be heated with these repeated draughts,) qualified his flagon from the water pitcher.

"Why," said the knight, "did you not tell me that this water was from the well of your blessed patron, St Dunstan?"

"Ay, truly," said the hermit, "and many a hundred of pagans did he baptize there, but I never heard that he drank any of it. Every thing should be put to its proper use in this world. St Dunstan knew, as well as any one, the prerogatives of a jovial friar."

And so saying, he reached the harp, and entertained his guest with the following characteristic song, to a sort of derry-down chorus, appropriate to an old English ditty.\*

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\* It may be proper to remind the reader, that the chorus of "derry down" is supposed to be as ancient, not only as the times of the Heptarchy, but as those of the Druids, and to have furnished the chorus to the hymns of these venerable persons when they went to the wood to gather misseltoe.



## THE BAREFOOTED FRIAR.

1.

I'll give thee, good fellow, a twelvemonth or  
twain,  
To search Europe through, from Byzantium to  
Spain;  
But ne'er shall you find, should you search till  
you tire,  
So happy a man as the Barefooted Friar.

2.

Your knight for his lady pricks forth in career,  
And is brought home at even-song prick'd through  
                                        with a spear;  
I confess him in haste—for his lady desires  
No comfort on earth save the Barefooted Friar's.

3.

Your monarch? — Pshaw! many a prince has  
been known  
To barter his robes for our cowl and our gown,  
But which of us e'er felt the idle desire  
To exchange for a crown the grey hood of a  
Friar!

4.

The Friar has walk'd out, and where'er he has  
gone,







“By my troth,” said the knight, “thou hast sung well and lustily, and in high praise of thine order. And, talking of the devil, Holy Clerk, are you not afraid that he may pay you a visit during some of your uncanonical pastimes?”

“I uncanonical!” answered the hermit; “I scorn the charge — I scorn it with my heels. — I serve the duty of my chapel duly and truly — Two masses daily, morning and evening, primes, noons, and vespers, *aves, credos, paters*” — —

“Excepting moon-light nights, when the venison is in season,” said his guest.

“*Exceptis excipiendis*,” replied the hermit, “as our old abbot taught me to say when impertinent laymen should ask me if I kept every punctilio of my order.”

“True, holy father,” said the knight; “but the devil is apt to keep an eye on such exceptions; he goes about, thou knowest, like a roaring lion.”

“Let him roar here if he dares,” said the friar; “a touch of my cord will make him roar as loud as the tongs of St Dunstan himself did. I never feared man, and I as little fear the devil and his imps. — Saint Dunstan, Saint Dubric, Saint Winibald, Saint Winifred, Saint Swibert, Saint Willick, not forgetting Saint Thomas a Kent, and my own poor merits to speed, I defy every devil of them, come cut and long tail. —



But to let you into a secret, I never speak upon such subjects, my friend, until after morning vespers."

He changed the conversation; fast and furious grew the mirth of the parties, and many a song was exchanged betwixt them, when their revels were interrupted by a loud knocking at the door of the hermitage.

The occasion of this interruption we can only explain by resuming the adventures of another set of our characters; for, like old Ariosto, we do not pique ourselves upon continuing uniformly to keep company with any one personage of our drama.



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CHAPTER XVIII.

*Away! our journey lies through dell and  
dingle,*

*Where the blythe fawn trips by its timid  
mother,*

*Where the broad oak, with intercepting boughs,  
Chequers the sun-beam in the green-sward  
alley —*

*Up and away! — for lovely paths are these  
To tread, when the glad Sun is on his throne;  
Less pleasant and less safe when Cynthia's  
lamp*

*With doubtful glimmer lights the dreary for-  
est.*

*Ettrick Forest.*

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WHEN Cedric the Saxon saw his son drop senseless down in the lists at Ashby, his first impulse was to order him into the custody and care of his own attendants, but the words choked in his throat. He could not bring himself to acknowledge, in presence of such an assembly, the



son whom he had renounced and disinherited. He ordered, however, Oswald to keep an eye upon him; and directed that officer, with two of his serfs, to convey Ivanhoe to Ashby so soon as the crowd was dispersed. Oswald, however, was anticipated in this good office. The crowd dispersed indeed, but the knight was nowhere to be seen.

It was in vain that Cedric's cup-bearer looked around for his young master—he saw the bloody spot on which he had lately sunk down, but himself he saw no longer; it seemed as if the fairies had conveyed him from the spot. Perhaps Oswald (for the Saxons were very superstitious) might have adopted some such hypothesis, to account for Ivanhoe's disappearance, had he not suddenly cast his eye upon a person attired like a squire, in whom he recognized the features of his fellow-servant Gurth. Anxious concerning his master's fate, and in despair at his sudden disappearance, the translated swine-herd was searching for him everywhere, and had neglected in doing so the concealment on which his own safety depended. Oswald deemed it his duty to secure Gurth, as a fugitive of whose fate his master was to judge.

Renewing his enquiries concerning the fate of Ivanhoe, the only information which the cup-bearer could collect from the bystanders was, that



the knight had been raised with care by certain well-attired grooms, and placed in a litter belonging to a lady among the spectators, which had immediately transported him out of the press. Oswald, on receiving this intelligence, resolved to return to his master for farther instructions, carrying along with him Gurth, whom he considered in some sort as a deserter from the service of Cedric.

The Saxon had been under very intense and agonizing apprehensions concerning his son; for Nature had asserted her rights, in spite of the patriotic stoicism which laboured to disown her. But no sooner was he informed that Ivanhoe was in careful, and probably in friendly hands, than the paternal anxiety which had been excited by the dubiety of his fate gave way anew to the feeling of injured pride and resentment at what he termed Wilfrid's filial disobedience. "Let him wander his way," said he — "let those leech his wounds for whose sake he encountered them. He is fitter to do the juggling tricks of the Norman chivalry than to maintain the fame and honour of his English ancestry with the glaive and brown-bill, the good old weapons of his country."

"If to maintain the honour of ancestry," said Rowena, who was present, "it is sufficient to be wise in council and brave in execution — to be



boldest among the bold, and gentlest among the gentle, I know no voice, save his father's — — ”

“Be silent, Lady Rowena! — on this subject only I hear you not. Prepare yourself for the Prince's festival: we have been summoned thither with unwonted circumstance of honour and of courtesy, such as the haughty Normans have rarely used to our race since the fatal day of Hastings. Thither will I go, were it only to shew these proud Normans how little the fate of a son, who could defeat their bravest, can affect a Saxon.”

“Thither, said Rowena, “do I NOT go; and I pray you to beware, lest what you mean for courage and constancy shall be accounted hardness of heart.”

“Remain at home then, ungrateful lady,” answered Cedric; “thine is the hard heart, which can sacrifice the weal of an oppressed people to an idle and unauthorized attachment. I seek the noble Athelstane, and with him attend the banquet of John of Anjou.”

He went accordingly to the banquet, of which we have already mentioned the principal events. Immediately upon retiring from the castle, the Saxon thanes, with their attendants, took horse; and it was during the bustle which attended their doing so, that Cedric, for the first time, cast his eyes upon the deserter Gurth. The noble Saxon



had, returned from the banquet, as we have seen, in no very placid humour, and wanted but a pretext for wreaking his anger upon some one. "The gyves!" he said, "the gyves! — Oswald — Hundibert! — Dogs and villains! — why leave ye the knave unfettered?"

Without daring to remonstrate, the companions of Gurth bound him with a halter, as the readiest cord which occurred. He submitted to the operation without remonstrance, except that, darting a reproachful look at his master, he said, "This comes of loving your flesh and blood better than mine own."

"To horse, and forward!" said Cedric.

"It is indeed full time," said the noble Athelstane; "for, if we ride not the faster, the worthy Abbot Walthew's preparations for a rere-supper\* will be altogether spoiled."

The travellers, however, used such speed as to reach the convent of St Withold's before the apprehended evil took place. The Abbot, himself of ancient Saxon descent, received the noble

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\* A rere-supper was a night-meal, and sometimes signified a collation, which was given at a late hour, after the regular supper had made its appearance.



Saxons with the profuse and exuberant hospitality of their nation, wherein they indulged to a late, or rather an early hour; nor did they take leave of their reverend host the next morning until they had shared with him a sumptuous refection.

As the cavalcade left the court of the monastery, an incident happened somewhat alarming to the Saxons, who, of all people of Europe, were most addicted to a superstitious observance of omens, and to whose opinions can be traced most of those notions upon such subjects, still to be found among our popular antiquities. For the Normans being a mixed race, and better informed according to the information of the times, had lost most of the superstitious prejudices which their ancestors had brought from Scandinavia, and piqued themselves upon thinking freely upon such topics.

In the present instance, the apprehension of impending evil was inspired by no less respectable a prophet than a large lean black dog, which, sitting upright, howled most piteously as the foremost riders left the gate, and presently afterwards, barking wildly, and jumping to and fro, seemed bent upon attaching itself to the party.

"I like not that music, father Cedric," said Athelstane; for by this title of respect he was accustomed to address him.



“Nor I either, uncle,” said Wamba; “I greatly fear we shall have to pay the piper.”

“In my mind,” said Athelstane, upon whose memory the Abbot’s good ale (for Burton was already famous for that genial liquor,) had made a favourable impression, “in my mind we had better turn back, and abide with the Abbot until the afternoon—it is unlucky to travel where your path is crossed by a monk, a hare, or a howling dog, until you have eaten your next meal.”

“Away!” said Cedric, impatiently; “the day is already too short for our journey. For the dog, I know it to be the cur of the run-away slave Gurth, a useless fugitive like its master.”

So saying, and rising at the same time in his stirrups impatient at the interruption of his journey, he launched his javelin at poor Fangs—for Fangs it was, who, having traced his master thus far upon his stolen expedition, had here lost him, and was now in his uncouth way rejoicing at his reappearance. The javelin inflicted a wound upon the animal’s shoulder, and narrowly missed pinning him to the earth; and Fangs fled howling, from the presence of the enraged thane. Gurth’s heart swelled within him, for he felt this meditated slaughter of his faithful adherent in a degree much deeper than the harsh treatment he had himself received. Having in vain at-



tempted to raise his hand to his eyes, he said to Wamba, who, seeing his master's ill humour, had prudently retreated to the rear, "I pray thee, do me the kindness to wipe my eyes with the skirt of thy mantle; the dust offends me, and these bonds will not let me help myself one way or another."

Wamba did him the service he required, and they rode side by side for some time, during which Gurth maintained a moody silence. At length he could repress his feelings no longer.

"Friend Wamba," said he, "of all those who are fools enough to serve Cedric, thou alone hast dexterity enough to make thy folly acceptable to him. Go to him, therefore, and tell him that neither for love nor fear will Gurth serve him longer. He may strike the head from me — he may scourge me — he may load me with irons — but henceforth he shall never compel me either to love or to obey him. Go to him then, and tell him that Gurth the son of Beowolf renounces his service."

"Assuredly," said Wamba, "fool as I am, I shall not do your fool's errand. Cedric hath another javelin stuck into his girdle, and thou knowest he does not always miss his mark."

"I care not," replied Gurth, "how soon he makes a mark of me. Yesterday he left Wilfrid, my young master, in his blood. To-day he has



striven to kill before my face the only other living creature that ever shewed me kindness. By St Edmund, St Dunstan, St Withold, St Edward the Confessor, and every other Saxon saint in the calendar, (for Cedric never swore by any that was not of Saxon lineage, and all his household had the same limited devotion,) I will never forgive him!"

"To my thinking now," said the Jester, who was frequently wont to act as peace-maker in the family, "our master did not propose to hurt Fangs, but only to affright him. For, if you observed, he rose in his stirrups, as thereby meaning to over-cast the mark; and so he would have done, but Fangs happening to bound up at the very moment, received a scratch, which I will be bound to heal with a penny's breadth of tar."

"If I thought so," said Gurth — "if I could but think so — but no — I saw the javelin was well aimed — I heard it whizz through the air with all the wrathful malevolence of him who cast it, and it quivered after it had pitched in the ground, as if with regret for having missed its mark. By the hog dear to St Anthony, I renounce him!"

And the indignant swine-herd resumed his sullen silence, which no efforts of the Jester could again induce him to break.

Meanwhile Cedric and Athelstane, the leaders of the troop, conversed together on the state of the



land, on the dissensions of the royal family, on the feuds and quarrels among the Norman nobles, and on the chance which there was that the oppressed Saxons might be able to free themselves from the yoke of the Normans, or at least to elevate themselves into consequence and independence, during the civil convulsions which were likely to ensue. On this subject Cedric was all animation. The restoration of the independence of his race was the idol of his heart, to which he had willingly sacrificed domestic happiness and the interests of his own son. But, in order to achieve this great revolution in favour of the native English, it was necessary they should be united among themselves, and act under an acknowledged head. The necessity of choosing their chief from the Saxon blood-royal was not only evident in itself, but had been made a solemn condition by those whom Cedric had entrusted with his secret plans and hopes. Athelstane had this quality at least; and though he had few mental accomplishments or talents to recommend him as a leader, he had still a goodly person, was no coward, had been accustomed to martial exercises, and seemed willing to defer to the advice of counsellors more wise than himself. Above all, he was known to be liberal and hospitable, and believed to be good-natured. But whatever pretensions Athelstane had to be considered as head



of the Saxon confederacy, many of that nation were disposed to prefer to his the title of the Lady Rowena, who drew her descent from Alfred, and whose father had been a chief renowned for wisdom, courage, and generosity, whose memory was highly honoured by his oppressed countrymen.

It would have been no difficult thing for Cedric, had he been so disposed, to have placed himself at the head of a third party, as formidable at least as any of the others. To counterbalance their royal descent, he had courage, activity, energy, and, above all, that devoted attachment to the cause which had procured him the epithet of THE SAXON, and his birth was inferior to none, excepting only that of Athelstane and his ward. These qualities, however, were unalloyed by the slightest shade of selfishness; and, instead of dividing yet farther his weakened nation by forming a faction of his own, it was a leading part of Cedric's plan to extinguish that which already existed, by promoting a marriage betwixt Rowena and Athelstane. An obstacle occurred to this his favourite project, in the mutual attachment of his ward and his son, and hence the original cause of the banishment of Wilfrid from the house of his father.

This stern measure Cedric had adopted, in hopes that, during Wilfrid's absence, Rowena



might relinquish her preference, but in this hope he was disappointed; a disappointment which might be attributed in part to the mode in which his ward had been educated. Cedric, to whom the name of Alfred was as that of a deity, had treated the sole remaining scion of that great monarch with a decree of observance, such as, perhaps, was in those days scarce paid to an acknowledged princess. Rowena's will had been in almost all cases a law to his household; and Cedric himself, as if determined that her sovereignty should be fully acknowledged within that little circle at least, seemed to take a pride in acting as the first of her subjects. Thus trained in the exercise, not only of free will, but despotic authority, Rowena was, by her previous education, disposed both to resist and to resent any attempt to controul her affections, or dispose of her hand contrary to her inclinations, and to assert her independence in a case in which even those females who have been trained up to obedience and subjection, are not infrequently apt to dispute the authority of guardians and parents. The opinions which she felt strongly she avowed boldly; and Cedric, who could not free himself from his habitual deference to her opinions, felt totally at a loss how to enforce his authority of guardian.

It was in vain that he attempted to dazzle her with the prospect of a visionary throne.



Rowena, who possessed strong sense, neither considered his plan as possible, nor as desirable, so far as she was concerned, could it have been achieved. Without attempting to conceal her avowed preference of Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, she declared that, were that favoured knight out of question, she would rather take refuge in a convent, than share a throne with Athelstane, whom, having always despised, she now began, on account of the trouble she received on his account, thoroughly to detest.

Nevertheless, Cedric, whose opinion of women's constancy was far from strong, persisted in using every means in his power to bring about the proposed match, in which he conceived he was rendering an important service to the Saxon cause. The sudden and romantic appearance of his son in the lists at Ashby, he had justly regarded as being almost a death's blow to his hopes. His paternal affection, it is true, had for an instant gained the victory both over pride and patriotism; but both had returned in full force, and, under their joint operation, he was now bent upon making a determined effort for the union of Athelstane and Rowena, together with expediting those other measures which seemed necessary to forward the restoration of Saxon independence.

On this last subject, he was now labouring



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with Athelstane, not without having reason, every now and then, to lament, like Hotspur, that he should have moved such a dish of skimmed milk to so honourable an action. Athelstane, it is true, was vain enough, and loved to have his ears tickled with tales of his high descent, and of his right by inheritance to homage and sovereignty. But his petty vanity was sufficiently gratified by receiving this homage at the hands of his immediate attendants, and of the Saxons who approached him. If he had the courage to encounter danger, he at least hated the trouble of going to seek it; and while he agreed in the general principles laid down by Cedric, concerning the claim of the Saxons to independence, and was still more easily convinced of his own title to reign over them when that independence should be attained, yet when the means of asserting these rights came to be discussed, he was still "Athelstane the Unready," slow, irresolute, procrastinating, and unenterprising. The warm and impassioned exhortations of Cedric had as little effect upon his impassive temper, as red-hot balls alighting in the water, which produce a little sound and smoke, and are instantly extinguished.

If, leaving this task, which might be compared to spurring a tired jade, or to hammering upon cold iron, Cedric fell back to his ward Rowena, he received little more satisfaction from confer-



ring with her. For, as his presence interrupted the discourse between the lady and her favourite attendant upon the gallantry and fate of Wilfried, Elgitha failed not to revenge both her mistress and herself, by recurring to the overthrow of Athelstane in the lists, the most disagreeable subject which could greet the ears of Cedric. To this sturdy Saxon, therefore, the day's journey was fraught with all manner of displeasure and discomfort; so that he more than once cursed internally the tournament, and him who had proclaimed it, together with his own folly in ever going thither.

At noon, upon the motion of Athelstane, the travellers paused in a woodland shade by a fountain, to repose their horses and partake of some provisions, with which the hospitable Abbot had loaded a sumpter mule. Their repast was a pretty long one, and these several interruptions rendered it impossible for them to hope to reach Rotherwood without travelling all night, a conviction which induced them to proceed on their way at a more hasty pace than they had hitherto used.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

*A train of armed men, some noble dame  
Escorting. (so their scattered words discovered,  
As unperceived I hung upon their rear)  
Are close at hand, and mean to pass the night  
Within the castle.*

### *Orra, a Tragedy.*

THE travellers had now reached the verge of the wooded country, and were about to plunge into its recesses, held dangerous at that time from the number of outlaws whom oppression and poverty had driven to despair, and who occupied the forests in such large bands as could easily bid defiance to the feeble police of the period. From these rovers, however, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, Cedric and Athelstane accounted themselves secure, as they had in attendance ten servants, besides Wamba and Gurth.



whose aid could not be counted upon, the one being a jester and the other a captive. It may be added, that in travelling thus late through the forest, Cedric and Athelstane relied on their descent and character, as well as their courage. The outlaws, whom the severity of the forest laws had reduced to this roving and desperate mode of life, were chiefly peasants and yeomen of Saxon descent, and were generally supposed to respect the persons and property of their countrymen.

As the travellers journeyed on their way, they were alarmed by repeated cries for assistance; and when they rode up to the place from whence they came, they were surprised to find a horse-litter placed upon the ground, beside which sat a young woman, richly dressed in the Jewish fashion, while an old man, whose yellow cap proclaimed him to belong to the same nation, walked up and down with gestures expressive of the deepest despair, and wrung his hands as if affected by some strange disaster.

To the enquiries of Athelstane and Cedric the old Jew could for some time only answer, by invoking the protection of all the patriarchs of the Old Testament successively against the sons of Ishmael, who were coming to smite them, hip and thigh, with the edge of the sword. When he began to come to himself out of this agony of terror, Isaac of York (for it was our old friend)



became at length able to explain, that he had hired a body guard of six men at Ashby, together with mules for carrying the litter of a sick friend. This party had undertaken to escort him as far as Doncaster. They had come thus far in safety; but having received information from a wood-cutter that there was a strong band of outlaws lying in wait in the woods before them, Isaac's mercenaries had not only taken flight, but had carried off with them the horses which bore the litter, and left the Jew and his daughter without the means either of defence or of retreat, to be plundered, and probably murdered, by the banditti, whom they expected every moment would bring down upon them. "Would it but please your valours," added Isaac, in a tone of deep humiliation, "to permit the poor Jews to travel under your safeguard, I swear by the tables of our law, that never has favour been conferred upon a child of Israel since the days of our captivity, which shall be more gratefully acknowledged."

"Dog of a Jew!" said Athelstane, whose memory was of that petty kind which stores up trifles of all kinds, but particularly trifling offences, "dost not remember how thou didst beard us in the gallery at the tilt-yard? Fight or flee, or compound with the outlaws as thou dost list, ask neither aid nor company from us; and if they rob only such as thee, who rob all the world,



I, for mine own share, shall hold them right honest folks."

Cedric did not assent to the severe proposal of his companion. "We will do better," he said, "to leave them two of our attendants and two horses to convey them back to the next village. It will diminish our strength but little; and, with your good sword, noble Athelstane, and the aid of those who remain, it will be light work for us to face twenty of these runagates."

Rowena, somewhat alarmed by the mention of outlaws in force, and so near them, strongly seconded the proposal of her guardian. But Rebecca, suddenly quitting her dejected posture, and making her way through the attendants to the palfrey of the Saxon lady, knelt down, and, after the Oriental fashion in addressing superiors, kissed the hem of Rowena's garment. Then rising, and throwing back her veil, she implored her in the great name of the God whom they both worshipped, and by that revelation of the Law in which they both believed, that she would have compassion upon them, and suffer them to go forward under their safeguard. "It is not for myself that I pray this favour," said Rebecca; "nor is it even for that poor old man. I know, that to wrong and to spoil our nation is a light fault, if not a merit, with the Christians; and what is it to us whether it be



done in the city, in the desert, or in the field? But it is in the name of one dear to many, and dear even to you, that I beseech you to let this sick person be transported with care and tenderness under your protection. For, if evil chance him, the last moment of your life would be embittered with regret for denying that which I ask of you."

The noble and solemn air with which Rebecca made this appeal, gave it double weight with the fair Saxon.

"The man is old and feeble," she said to her guardian, "the maiden young and beautiful, their friend sick and in peril of his life—Jews though they be, we cannot as Christians leave them in this extremity. Let them unload two of the sumpter-mules, and put the baggage behind two of the serfs. The mules may transport the litter, and we have led horses for the old man and his daughter."

Cedric readily assented to what she proposed, and Athelstane only added the condition, "that they should travel in the rear of the whole party, where Wamba," he said, "might attend them with his shield of boar's brawn."

"I have left my shield in the tilt-yard," answered the Jester, "as has been the fate of many a better knight than myself."



Athelstane coloured deeply, for such had been his own fate on the last day of the tournament; while Rowena, who was pleased in the same proportion, as if to make amends for the brutal jest of her unfeeling suitor, requested Rebecca to ride by her side.

“It were not fit I should do so,” answered Rebecca, with proud humility, “where my society might be held a disgrace to my protectress.”

By this time the change of baggage was hastily achieved, for the single word “outlaws” rendered every one sufficiently alert, and the approach of twilight made the sound yet more impressive. Amid the bustle, Gurth was taken from horseback, in the course of which removal he prevailed upon the Jester to slack the cord with which his arms were bound. It was so negligently refastened, perhaps intentionally on the part of Wamba, that Gurth found no difficulty in freeing his arms altogether from bondage, and then gliding into the thicket he made his escape from the party.

The bustle had been considerable, and it was some time before Gurth was missed; for, as he was to be placed for the rest of the journey behind a servant, every one supposed that some other of his companions had him under his custody, and when it began to be whispered among



them that Gurth had actually disappeared, they were under such immediate expectation of an attack from the outlaws, that it was not held convenient to pay much attention to the circumstance.

The path upon which the party travelled was now so narrow, as not to admit, with any sort of convenience, above two riders abreast, and began to descend into a dingle, traversed by a brook whose banks were broken, swampy, and overgrown with dwarf willows. Cedric and Athelstane, who were at the head of their retinue, saw the risk of being attacked in this pass; but neither of them having had much practice in war, no better mode of preventing the danger occurred to them than that they should hasten on as fast as possible. Advancing, therefore, without much order, they had just crossed the brook with a part of their followers, when they were assailed in front, flank, and rear at once, with an impetuosity to which, in their confused and ill-prepared condition, it was impossible to offer effectual resistance. The shout of "A white dragon! — a white dragon! — Saint George for merry England!" war-cries adopted by the assailants, as belonging to their assumed character of Saxon outlaws, was heard on every side, and on every side enemies appeared with a rapidity of advance and attack which seemed to multiply their numbers.



Both the Saxon chiefs were made prisoners at the same moment, and each under circumstances expressive of his character. Cedric, the instant that an enemy appeared, launched at him his remaining javelin, which, taking better effect than that which he had hurled at Fangs, nailed the man against an oak-tree that happened to be close behind him. Thus far successful, Cedric spurred his horse against a second, drawing his sword at the same time, and striking with such inconsiderate fury, that his weapon encountered a thick branch which hung over him, and he was disarmed by the violence of his own blow. He was instantly made prisoner, and pulled from his horse by two or three of the banditti who crowded around him. Athelstane shared his captivity, his bridle having been seized, and he himself forcibly dismounted, long before he could draw his weapon, or assume any posture of effectual defence.

The attendants, embarrassed with baggage, surprised and terrified at the fate of their masters, fell an easy prey to the assailants; while the Lady Rowena, in the centre of the cavalcade, and the Jew and his daughter in the rear, experienced the same misfortune.

Of all the train none escaped except Wamba, who showed upon the occasion much more courage than those who pretended to greater sense.



He possessed himself of a sword belonging to one of the domestics, who was just drawing it with a tardy and irresolute hand, laid about him like a lion, drove back several who approached him, and made a brave though ineffectual attempt to succour his master. Finding himself overpowered, the Jester at length threw himself from his horse, plunged into the thicket, and, favoured by the general confusion, escaped from the scene of action.

Yet the valiant Jester, so soon as he found himself safe, hesitated more than once whether he should not turn back, and share the captivity of a master to whom he was sincerely attached.

“I have heard men talk of the blessings of freedom,” said he to himself, “but I wish any wise man would teach me what use to make of it now that I have it.”

As he pronounced these words aloud, a voice very near him called out in a low and cautious tone, “Wamba!” and, at the same time, a dog, which he recognized to be Fangs, jumped up and fawned upon him. “Gurth!” answered Wamba, with the same caution, and the swine-herd immediately stood before him.

“What is the matter?” said he eagerly; “what mean these cries, and that clashing of swords?”



“Only a trick of the times,” said Wamba; “they are all prisoners.”

“Who are prisoners?” exclaimed Gurth, impatiently.

“My lord, and my lady, and Athelstane, and Hundibert, and Oswald.”

“In the name of God!” said Gurth, “how came they prisoners? — And to whom?”

“Our master was too ready to fight,” said the Jester; “and Athelstane was not ready enough, and no other person was ready at all. And they are prisoners to green cassocks, and black vizors. And they lie all tumbled about on the green, like the crab-apples that you shake down to your swine. And I would laugh at it,” said the honest Jester, “if I could for weeping.” And he shed tears of unfeigned sorrow.

Gurth’s countenance kindled — “Wamba,” he said, “thou hast a weapon, and thy heart was ever stronger than thy brain, — we are only two — but a sudden attack from men of resolution will do much — follow me.”

“Whither? — and for what purpose?” said the Jester.

“To rescue Cedric.”

“But you have renounced his service but now,” said Wamba.

“That,” said Gurth, “was but while he was fortunate — follow me.”



As the Jester was about to obey, a third person suddenly made his appearance, and commanded them both to halt. From his dress and arms, Wamba would have conjectured him to be one of those outlaws who had just assailed his master; but besides that he wore no masque, the glittering baldric across his shoulder, with the rich bugle-horn which it supported, as well as the calm and commanding expression of his voice and manner, made him, notwithstanding the twilight, recognize Locksley the yeoman, who had been victorious, under such disadvantageous circumstances, in the contest for the prize of archery.

“What is the meaning of all this,” said he, “or who is it that rifle, and ransom, and make prisoners, in these forests?”

“You may look at their cassocks close by,” said Wamba, “and see whether they be thy children’s coats or no — for they are as like thine own, as one green pea-cod is to another.”

“I will learn that presently,” answered Locksley; “and I charge ye, on peril of your lives, not to stir from the place where ye stand, until I have returned. Obey me, and it shall be the better for you and your masters. — Yet stay, I must render myself as like these men as possible.”

So saying, he unbuckled his baldric with the bugle, took a feather from his cap, and gave them



to Wamba; then drew a vizard from his pouch, and, repeating his charges to them to stand fast, went to execute his purpose of reconnoitring.

“Shall we stand fast, Gurth?” said Wamba; “or shall we e’en give him leg bail? In my foolish mind, he had all the equipage of a thief too much in readiness, to be himself a true man.”

“Let him be the devil,” said Gurth, “an he will. We can be no worse of waiting his return. If he belong to that party, he must already have given them the alarm, and it will avail nothing either to fight or fly. Besides, I have late experience, that arrant thieves are not the worst men in the world to have to deal with.”

The yeoman returned in the course of a few minutes.

“Friend Gurth,” he said, “I have mingled among yon men, and have learnt to whom they belong, and whither they are bound. There is, I think, no chance that they will proceed to any actual violence against their prisoners. For three men to attempt them at this moment, were little less than madness, for they are good men of war, and have as such placed centinels to give the alarm when any one approaches. But I trust soon to gather such a force, as may act in defiance of all their precautions; you are both servants, and, as I think, faithful servants, of Cedric the Saxon,



the friend of the rights of Englishmen. He shall not want English hands to help him in this extremity. Come then with me, until I gather more aid."

So saying, he walked through the wood at a great pace, followed by the jester and the swineherd. It was not consistent with Wamba's humour to travel long in silence.

"I think," said he, looking at the baldrick and bugle which he still carried, "that I saw the arrow shot which won this gay prize, and that not so long since as Christmas."

"And I," said Gurth, "could take it on my haly-dome, that I have heard the voice of the good yeoman who won it, by night as well as by day, and that the moon is not three days older since I did so."

"Mine honest friends," replied the yeoman, "who, or what I am, is little to the present purpose; should I free your master, you will have reason to think me the best friend you have ever had in your lives. And whether I am known by one name or another — or whether I can draw a bow as well or better than a cow-keeper, or whether it is my pleasure to walk in sunshine or by moonlight, are matters, which, as they do not concern you, so neither need ye busy yourselves respecting them."



“Our heads are in the lion’s mouth,” said Wamba, in a whisper to Gurth, “got them out how we can.”

“Hush — be silent,” said Gurth, “offend him not by thy folly, and I trust sincerely that all will do well.”



## CHAPTER XX.

*When autumn nights were long and drear,  
And forest walks were dark and dim,  
How sweetly on the pilgrim's ear  
Was wont to steal the hermit's hymn.*

*Devotion borrows Music's tone,  
And Music took Devotion's wing;  
And, like the bird that hails the sun,  
They soar to heaven, and soaring sing.  
The Hermit of St Clement's Well.*

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It was after three hours good walking that the servants of Cedric, with their mysterious guide, arrived at a small opening in the forest, in the centre of which grew an oak-tree of enormous magnitude, throwing its twisted branches in every direction. Beneath this tree four or five yemen lay stretched on the ground, while an-



other, as sentinel, walked to and fro in the moonlight shade.

Upon hearing the sound of feet approaching, the watch instantly gave the alarm, and the sleepers as suddenly started up and bent their bows. Six arrows placed on the string were pointed towards the quarter from which the travellers approached, when, their guide being recognized, was welcomed with every token of respect and attachment, and all signs and fears of a rough reception at once subsided.

“Where is the Miller?” was his first question.

“On the road towards Rotherham.”

“With how many?” demanded the leader, for such he seemed to be.

“With six men, and good hope of booty, if it please St Nicholas.”

“Devoutly spoken,” said Locksley; “and where is Allen-a-Dale?”

“Walked up towards the Watling-street to watch for the Prior of Jorvaulx.”

“That is well thought on also,” replied the Captain; — “and where is the friar?”

“In his cell.”

“Thither will I go,” said Locksley. “Disperse and seek your companions. Collect what force you can, for there’s game afoot that must be hunted hard, and will turn to bay. Meet me here by day break. — And stay,” he added, “I have



forgotten what is most necessary of the whole — Two of you take the road quickly towards Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Bœuf. A set of gallants, who have been mnsquerading in such guise as our own, are carrying a band of prisoners thither — Watch them closely, for even if they reach the castle before we collect our force, our honour is concerned to punish them, and we will find means to do so. — Keep a close watch on them therefore; and dispatch one of your comrades, the lightest of foot, to bring the news of the yeomen whereabouts.”

They promised implicit obedience, and departed with alacrity on their different errands. In the meanwhile their leader and his two companions, who now looked upon him with great respect, as well as some fear, pursued their way to the chapel of Copmanhurst.

When they had reached the little moon-light glade, having in front the reverend, though ruinous chapel, and the rude hermitage, so well suited to ascetic devotion, Wamba whispered to Gurth, “If this be the habitation of a thief, it makes good the old proverb, The nearer the church the farther from God. — And by my cockscomb,” he added, “I think it be even so — Harken but to the black sanctus which they are singing in the hermitage!”

In fact the anchorite and his guest were per-



forming, at the full extent of their very powerful lungs, an old drinking song, of which this was the burthen: —

«Come, trowl the brown bowl to me,  
Bully boy, bully boy,  
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me:  
Ho! jolly Jenkin, I spy a knave in drinking,  
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me.”

«Now, that is not ill sung,” said Wamba, who had thrown in a few of his own flourishes to help out the chorus. «But who, in the saint’s name, ever expected to have heard such a jolly chaunt come from out a hermit’s cell at midnight?”

«Marry, that should I,” said Gurth, «for the jolly Clark of Copmanhurst is a known man, and kills half the deer that are stolen in this walk. Men say that the keeper has complained to his official, and that he will be stripped of his cowl and cope altogether, if he keep not better order.”

While they were thus speaking, Locksley’s loud and repeated knocks had at length disturbed the anchorite and his guest. «By my beads,” said the hermit, stopping short in a grand flourish, «here come more benighted guests. I would not for my cowl that they found us in this goodly exercise. All men have their enemies, good Sir Sluggard; and there be those malignant enough



to construe the hospitable refreshment which I have been offering to you, a weary traveller, for the matter of three short hours, into sheer drunkenness and debauchery, vices alike alien to my profession and my disposition."

"Base calumniators!" replied the knight; "I would I had the chastising of them. Nevertheless, Holy Clerk, it is true that all have their enemies; and there be those in this very land whom I would rather speak to through the bars of my helmet than barefaced."

"Get thine iron pot on thy head then, friend Sluggard, as quickly as thy nature will permit," said the hermit, "while I remove these pewter flagons, whose late contents run strangely in mine own pate; and to drown the clatter—for, in faith, I feel somewhat unsteady—strike into the tune which thou hearest me sing; it is no matter for the words—I scarce know them myself."

So saying, he struck up a thundering *De profundis clamavi*, under cover of which he removed the apparatus of their banquet; while the knight, laughing heartily, and arming himself all the while, assisted his host with his voice from time to time as his mirth permitted.

"What devil's mattins are you after at this hour?" said a voice from without.

"Heaven forgive you, sir traveller!" said the



hermit, whose own noise, and perhaps his nocturnal potations, prevented him from recognizing accents which were tolerably familiar to him —  
 “Wend on your way, in the name of God and Saint Dunstan, and disturb not the devotions of me and my holy brother.”

“Mad priest,” answered the voice from without, “open to Locksley.”

“All’s safe — all’s right,” said the hermit to his companion.

“But who is he?” said the Black Knight; “it imports me much to know.”

“Who is he?” answered the hermit; “I tell thee he is a friend.”

“But what friend?” answered the knight; “for he may be friend to thee and none of mine.”

“What friend?” replied the hermit; “that now, is one of the questions that is more easily asked than answered. What friend? — why, he is, now that I bethink me a little, the very same honest keeper I told thee off a while since.”

“Ay, as honest a keeper as thou art a pious hermit,” replied the knight, “I doubt it not. But undo the door to him before he beat it from its hinges.”

The dogs, in the meantime, which had made a dreadful baying at the commencement of the disturbance, seemed now to recognize the voice



of him who stood without; for, totally changing their manner, they scratched and whined at the door, as if interceding for his admission. The hermit speedily unbolted his portal, and admitted Locksley, with his two companions.

“Why, hermit,” was the yeoman’s first question so soon as he beheld the knight, “what boon companion hast thou here?”

“A brother of our order,” replied the friar, shaking his head; “we have been at our orisons all night.”

“He is a monk of the church militant, I think,” answered Locksley; “and there be more of them abroad. I tell thee, friar, thou must lay down the rosary and take up the quarter-staff; we shall need every one of our merry men, whether clerk or layman. — But,” he added, taking him a step aside, “art thou mad? to give admittance to a knight thou dost not know? Hast thou forgot our articles?”

“Not know him!” replied the friar boldly, “I know him as well as the beggar knows his dish.”

“And what is his name then?” demanded Locksley.

“His name,” said the hermit — “his name is Sir Anthony of Scrablestone — as if I would drink with a man, and did not know his name?”

“Thou hast been drinking more than enough,



friar," said the woodsman, "and, I fear, prating more than enough too."

"Good yeoman," said the knight, coming forward, "be not wroth with my merry host. He did but afford me the hospitality which I would have compelled from him if he had refused it."

"Thou compel!" said the friar; "wait but till I have changed this grey gown for a green cassock, and if I make not a quarter-staff ring twelve upon thy pate, I am neither true clerk nor good woodsman."

While he spoke thus, he stript off his gown, and appeared in a close black buckram doublet and drawers, over which he speedily did on a cassock of green, and hose of the same colour. "I pray thee truss my points," said he to Wamba, "and thou shalt have a cup of sack for thy labour."

"Gramercy for thy sack," said Wamba; "but think'st thou it is lawful for me to aid you to transmew thyself from a holy hermit into a sinful forester?"

"Never fear," said the hermit; "I will but confess the sins of my green cloak to my grey-friar's frock, and all shall be well again."

"Amen!" answered the Jester; "a broad-cloth penitent should have a sackcloth confessor, and your frock may absolve my motley doublet into the bargain."

So saying, he accommodated the friar with his



assistance in tying the endless number of points, as the laces which attached the hose to the doublet were then termed.

While they were thus employed, Locksley led the knight a little apart, and addressed him thus. "Deny it not, Sir Knight — you are he who decided the victory to the advantage of the English against the strangers on the second day of the tournament at Ashby."

"And what follows if you guess truly, good yeoman?" replied the knight.

"I should in that case hold you," replied the yeoman, "a friend to the weaker party."

"Such is the duty of a true knight at least," replied the Black Champion; "and I would not willingly that there were reason to think otherwise of me."

"But for my purpose," said the yeoman, "thou shouldst be as well a good Englishman as a good knight; for that, which I have to speak of, concerns, indeed, the duty of every honest man, but is more especially that of a true-born native of England."

"You can speak to no one," replied the knight, "to whom England, and the life of every Englishman, can be dearer than to me."

"I would willingly believe so," said the woodsman, "for never had this country such need to be supported by those who love her. Hear me,



and I will tell thee of an enterprize, in which, if thou be'st really that which thou seemest, thou may'st take an honourable part. A band of villains, in the disguise of better men than themselves, have made themselves master of the person of a noble Englishman, called Cedric the Saxon, together with his daughter and his friend Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and have transported them to a castle in this forest called Torquilstone. I ask of thee, as a good knight and a good Englishman, wilt thou aid in their rescue?"

"I am bound by my vow to do so," replied the knight; "but I would willingly know who you are, who request my assistance in their behalf?"

"I am," said the forester, "a nameless man; but I am the friend of my country, and of my country's friends — With this account of me you must for the present remain satisfied, the more especially since you yourself desire to continue unknown — Believe, however, that my word, when pledged, is as inviolate as if I wore golden spurs."

"I willingly believe it," said the knight; "I have been accustomed to study mens' countenances, and I can read in thine honesty and resolution — I will, therefore, ask thee no further questions, but aid thee in setting at freedom these oppressed captives; which done, I trust we shall



part better acquainted, and well satisfied with each other."

"So," said Wamba to Gurth, — for the friar being now fully equipped, the jester, having approached to the other side of the hut, had heard the conclusion of the conversation, — "So we have got a new ally — I trust the valour of the knight will be truer metal than the religion of the hermit, or the honesty of the yeoman; for this Locksley looks like a born deer-stealer, and the priest like a lusty hypocrite."

"Hold thy peace, Wamba," said Gurth; "it may all be as thou dost guess, — but were the horned devil to rise and proffer me his assistance to set at liberty Cedric and the Lady Rowena, I fear I should hardly have religion enough to refuse the foul fiend's offer, and bid him get behind me."

The friar was now completely accoutered as a yeoman, with sword and buckler, bow and quiver, and a strong partisan over his shoulder. He left his cell at the head of the party, and, having carefully locked the door, deposited the key under the threshold.

"Art thou in condition to do good service, friar," said Locksley, "or does the brown bowl still run in thy head?"

"Not more than a draught of St Dunstan's fountain will allay," answered the priest; "some-



thing there is of a whizzing in my brain, and of instability in my legs, but you shall presently see both pass away."

So saying, he stepped to the stone basin, in which the waters of the fountain as they fell formed bubbles which danced in the white moonlight, and took as long a draught as if he had meant to exhaust the spring.

"When didst thou drink as deep a draught of water before, Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst?" said the Black Knight.

"Never since my wine-butt leaked, and let out its liquor by an illegal vent," replied the friar, "and so left me nothing to drink but my patron's bounty here."

Then plunging his hands and head into the fountain, he washed from them all marks of the midnight revel.

Thus refreshed and sobered, the jolly priest twirled his heavy partizan round his head with three fingers, as if he had been balancing a reed, exclaiming at the same time, "Where be those false ravishers, who carry off wenches against their will? May the foul fiend fly off with me, if I am not man enough for a dozen of them."

"Swearest thou, Holy Clerk?" said the Black Knight.

"Clerk me no clerks," replied the transformed priest; "by Saint George and the Dragon,  
LXIII.



I am no longer a shaveling than while my frock is on my back — When I am cased in my green cassock, I will drink, swear, and woo a lass, with any blithe forester in the West Riding.”

“Come on, Jack Priest,” said Locksley, “and be silent; thou art as noisy as a whole convent on a holy eve, when the father abbot has gone to bed. — Come on you too, my masters, tarry not to talk of it — I say, come on, we must collect all our forces, and few enough we shall have, if we are to storm the castle of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf.”

“What! is it Front-de-Bœuf,” said the Black Knight, “who has stopt on the king’s highway the king’s liege subjects? — Is he turned thief and oppressor?”

“Oppressor he ever was,” said Locksley.

“And for thief,” said the priest, “I doubt if ever he were even half so honest a man as many a thief of my acquaintance.”

“Move on, priest, and be silent,” said the yeoman; “it were better you led the way to the place of rendezvous, than say what should be left unsaid, both in decency and prudence.”

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CHAPTER XXI.

*Alas, how many hours and years have past,  
Since human forms have round this table sate,  
Or lamp, or taper, on its surface gleam'd!  
Methinks I hear the sound of time long pass'd  
Still murmuring o'er us, in the lofty void  
Of these dark arches, like the ling'ring voices  
Of those who long within their graves have  
slept.*

*Orra, a Tragedy.*

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WHILE these measures were taking in behalf of Cedric and his companions, the armed men by whom the latter had been seized, hurried their captives along towards the place of security, where they intended to imprison them. But darkness came on fast, and the paths of the wood seemed but imperfectly known to the marauders. They were compelled to make several long halts, and once or twice to return on their road to re-



sume the direction which they wished to pursue. The summer morn had dawned upon them ere they could travel in full assurance that they held the right path. But confidence returned with light, and the cavalcade now moved rapidly forward. Meanwhile, the following dialogue took place between the two leaders of the banditti.

«It is time thou should'st leave us, Sir Maurice,” said the Templar to Bracy, «in order to prepare the second part of thy mystery. Thou art next, thou knowest, to act the Knight Deliverer.”

«I have thought better of it,” said Bracy; «I will not leave thee till the prize is fairly deposited in Front-de-Bœuf's castle. There will I appear before the Lady Rowena in mine own shape, and trust that she will set down to the vehemence of my passion, the violence of which I have been guilty.”

«And what has made thee change thy plan, De Bracy?” replied the Knight Templar.

«That concerns thee nothing,” answered his companion.

«I would hope, however, Sir Knight,” said the Templar, «that this alteration of measures arises from no suspicion of my honourable meaning, such as Fitzurse endeavoured to instil into thee.”

«My thoughts are my own,” answered De



Bracy; "the fiend laughs, they say, when one thief robs another; and we know, that were he to spit fire and brimstone instead, it would never prevent a Templar from following his bent."

"Or the leader of a Free Company," answered the Templar, "from dreading at the hands of a comrade and friend, the injustice he does to all mankind."

"This is unprofitable and perilous recrimination," answered De Bracy; "suffice it to say, I know the morals of the Temple-Order, and I will not give thee the power of cheating me out of the fair prey for which I have run such risks."

"Psha," replied the Templar, "what hast thou to fear? — Thou knowest the vows of my order."

"Right well," said De Bracy, "and also how they are kept. Come, Sir Templar, the laws of gallantry have a liberal interpretation in Palestine, and this is a case in which I will trust nothing to your conscience."

"Hear the truth then," said the Templar. "I care not for your blue-eyed beauty. There is in that train, one who will make me a better mate."

"What! would'st thou stoop to the waiting damsel?" said De Bracy.

"No, Sir Knight," said the Templar, haughtily. "To the waiting-woman will I not stoop."



I have a prize among the captives, as lovely as thine own."

"By the mass, thou meanest the fair Jewess," said De Bracy.

"And if I do," said Bois-Guilbert, "who shall gainsay me?"

"No one that I know," said De Bracy, "unless it be your vow of celibacy, or a check of conscience for an intrigue with a Jewess."

"For my vow," said the Templar, "our grand master hath granted me a dispensation. And for my conscience, a man that has slain three hundred Saracens, need not reckon up every little failing, like a village girl at her first confession upon Good Friday eve."

"Thou knowest best thine own privileges," said De Bracy. "Yet, I would have sworn thy thought had been more on the old usurer's money bags, then on the black eyes of the daughter."

"I can admire both," answered the Templar; "besides, the old Jew is but half prize. I must share his spoils with Front-de-Bœuf, who will not lend us the use of his castle for nothing. I must have something that I can term exclusively my own by this foray of ours, and I have fixed on the lovely Jewess as my peculiar prize. But, now thou knowest my drift, thou wilt resume thine own original plan, wilt thou not? — Thou hast nothing, thou see'st, to fear from my interference."



“No,” replied De Bracy, “I will remain beside my prize — what thou say’st is passing true, but I like not the privileges acquired by the dispensation of the grand master, and the merit acquired by the slaughter of three hundred Saracens. You have too good a right to a free pardon, to render you very scrupulous about peccadilloes.”

While this dialogue was proceeding, Cedric was endeavouring to wring out of those who guarded him an avowal of their character and purpose. “You should be Englishmen,” said he; “and yet, sacred heaven! you prey upon your countrymen as if you were very Normans. You should be my neighbours, and, if so, my friends; for which of my English neighbours have reason to be otherwise? I tell ye, yeomen, that even those among ye who have been branded with outlawry have had from me protection; for I have pitied their miseries, and curst the oppression of their tyrannic nobles. What, then, would you have of me? or in what can this violence serve ye? — Ye are worse than brute beasts in your actions, and will ye imitate them in their very dumbness?”

It was in vain that Cedric expostulated with his guards, who had too many good reasons for their silence to be induced to break it either by his wrath or his expostulations. They continued



to hurry him along, travelling at a very rapid rate, until, at the end of an avenue of huge trees, arose Torquilstone, now the hoary and ancient castle of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. It was a fortress of no great size, consisting of a donjon, or large and high square tower, surrounded by buildings of inferior height, which were encircled by an inner court-yard. Around the exterior wall was a deep moat, supplied with water from a neighbouring rivulet. Front-de-Bœuf, whose character placed him often at feud with his enemies, had made considerable additions to the strength of his castle, by building towers upon the outward wall, so as to flank it at every angle. The access, as usual in castles of the period, lay through an arched barbican, or outwork, which was terminated and defended by a small turret at each corner.

Cedric no sooner saw the turrets of Front-de-Bœuf's castle raise their grey and moss-grown battlements, glimmering in the morning sun above the wood by which they were surrounded, than he instantly augured more truly concerning the cause of his misfortune.

"I did injustice," he said, "to the thieves and outlaws of these woods, when I supposed such banditti to belong to their bands; I might as justly have confounded the foxes of these brakes with the ravening wolves of France. Tell me,



dogs — is it my life or my wealth that your master aims at? Is it too much that two Saxons, myself and the noble Athelstane, should hold land in the country which was once the patrimony of our race? — Put us then to death, and complete your tyranny by taking our lives, as you began with our liberties. If the Saxon Cedric cannot rescue England, he is willing to die for her. Tell your tyrannical master, I do only beseech him to dismiss the Lady Rowena in honour and safety. She is a woman, and he need not dread her; and with us will die all who dare fight in her cause.”

The attendants remained as mute to this address as to the former, and they now stood before the gate of the castle. Bracy winded his horn three times, and the archers and cross-bowmen, who had manned the wall upon seeing their approach, hastened to lower the drawbridge and admit them. The prisoners were compelled to alight by their guards, and conducted to an apartment, where a hasty repast was offered them, of which none but Athelstane felt any inclination to partake. Neither had the descendant of the Confessor much time to do justice to the good cheer placed before them, for their guards gave him and Cedric to understand that they were to be imprisoned in a chamber apart from Rowena. Resistance was vain; and they were compelled



to follow to a large room, which, rising on clumsy Saxon pillars, resembled those refectories and chapter houses which may be still seen in the most ancient parts of our most ancient monasteries.

The Lady Rowena was next separated from her train, and conducted, with courtesy indeed, but still without consulting her inclination, to a distant apartment. The same alarming distinction was conferred on Rebecca, in spite of her father's entreaties, who offered even money, in this extremity of distress, that she might be permitted to abide with him. "Base unbeliever," answered one of his guards, "when thou hast seen thy lair thou wilt not wish thy daughter to partake it." And, without farther discussion, the old Jew was forcibly dragged off in a different direction from the other prisoners. The domestics, after being carefully searched and disarmed, were confined in another part of the castle; and Rowena was refused even the comfort she might have derived from the attendance of her hand-maiden Elgitha.

The apartment in which the Saxon chiefs were confined, for to them we turn our first attention, although at present used as a sort of guard-room, had formerly been the great hall of the castle. It was now abandoned to meaner purposes, because the present lord, among other additions to the



convenience, security, and beauty of his baronial residence, had erected a new and noble hall, whose vaulted roof was supported by lighter and more elegant pillars, and fitted up with that higher degree of ornament, which the Normans had already introduced into architecture.

Cedric paced the apartment, filled with indignant reflections upon the past and of the present, while the apathy of his companion served, instead of patience and philosophy, to defend him against every thing save the inconvenience of the present moment; and so little did he feel even these last, that he was only from time to time roused to a reply by Cedric's animated and impassioned appeal to him.

“Yes,” said Cedric, half speaking to himself, and half addressing himself to Athelstane, “it was in this very hall that my father feasted with Torquil Wolfganger, when he entertained the valiant and unfortunate Harold, then advancing against the Norwegians, who had united themselves to the rebel Tosti. — It was in this hall that Harold returned the magnanimous answer to the ambassador of his rebel brother. Oft have I heard my father kindle as he told the tale. The envoy of Tosti was admitted, when this ample room could scarce contain the crowd of noble Saxon leaders, who were quaffing the blood red wine around their monarch.”



“I hope,” said Athelstane, somewhat moved by this part of his friend’s discourse, “they will not forget to send us some wine and refectious at noon — we had scarce a breathing-space allowed to break our fast, and I never have the benefit of my food when I eat immediately after dismounting from horseback, though the leaches recommend that practice.”

Cedric went on with his story without noticing this interjectional observation of his friend.

“The envoy of Tosti,” he said, “moved up the hall, undismayed by the frowning countenances of all around him, until he made his obeisance before the throne of King Harold.

‘What terms,’ he said, ‘Lord King, hath thy brother Tosti to hope, if he should lay down his arms, and crave peace at thy hands?’

‘A brother’s love,’ cried the generous Harold, ‘and the fair earldom of Northumberland.’

‘But should Tosti accept these terms,’ continued the envoy, ‘what lands shall be assigned to his faithful ally, Hardrada King of Norway?’

‘Seven feet of English ground,’ answered Harold, fiercely, ‘or, as Hardrada is said to be a giant, perhaps we may allow him twelve inches more.’

“The hall rung with acclamations. and cup and horn was filled to the Norwegian, who should be speedily in possession of his English territory.”



“I could have pledged them with all my soul,” said Athelstane, “for my tongue cleaves to my palate.”

“The baffled envoy,” continued Cedric, pursuing with animation his tale, though it interested not the listener, “retreated, to carry to Tosti and his ally the ominous answer of his injured brother. It was then that the walls of Stamford, and the fatal Welland, renowned in prophecy,\* beheld that direful conflict, in which, after displaying the most undaunted valour, the

\* Close by Stamford, was fought, in 1066, the bloody battle in which Harold defeated his rebel brother Tosti, and the Norwegians, only a few days before his fall at Hastings. The bridge over the Welland was furiously contested. One Norwegian long defended it by his single arm, and was at length pierced with a spear thrust through the planks from a boat beneath. Spencer and Drayton, both allude to the prophecies current concerning the fatal Welland:

„Which to that ominous flood much fear and reverence wan.”

*Poly-Olbion.*

L. T.



King of Norway, and Tosti, both fell, with ten thousand of their bravest followers. Who would have thought that upon the proud day when this battle was won, the very gale which waved the Saxon banners in triumph, was filling the Norman sails, and impelling them to the fatal shores of Sussex? — Who would have thought that Harold, within a few brief days, would himself possess no more of his kingdom, than the share which he allotted in his wrath to the Norwegian invader? — Who would have thought that you, noble Athelstane — that you, descended of Harold's blood, and that I, whose father was not the worst defender of the Saxon crown, should be prisoners to a vile Norman, in the very hall in which our ancestors held such high festival!"

"It is sad enough," replied Athelstane; "but I trust they will hold us to a moderate ransom — At any rate it cannot be their purpose to starve us outright; and yet, although it is high noon, I see no preparations for serving dinner. — Look up at the window, noble Cedric, and judge by the sun-beams if it is not on the verge of noon."

"It may be so," answered Cedric; "but I cannot look on that stained lattice without its awakening other reflections than those which concern the passing moment, or its privations. When that window was wrought, my noble friend, our hardy fathers knew not the art of making glass,



or of staining it — The bride of Wolfganger's father brought an artist from Normandy to adorn his hall with this new species of emblazonment, that breaks the golden light of God's blessed day into so many fantastic hues. The foreigner came here, poor, beggarly, cringing, and subservient, ready to doff his cap to the meanest native of the household. He returned pampered and proud, to tell his rapacious countrymen of the wealth and the simplicity of the Saxon nobles — a folly, oh Athelstane, foreboded of old, as well as foreseen, by those descendants of Hengist and his hardy tribes who retained the simplicity of their manners. We made these strangers our bosom friends, our confidential servants; we borrowed their artists and their arts, and despised the honest simplicity and hardihood with which our brave ancestors supported themselves, and we became enervated by Norman arts long ere we fell under Norman arms. Far better was our homely diet, eaten in peace and liberty, than the luxurious dainties, the love of which hath delivered us as bondsmen to the foreign conqueror."

"I should," replied Athelstane, "hold very humble diet a luxury at present; and it astonishes me, noble Cedric, that you can bear so truly in mind the memory of past deeds, when it appeareth you forget the very hour of dinner."

"It is time lost," muttered Cedric apart and



impatiently," "to speak to him of aught else but that which concerns his appetite! The soul of Hardicanute hath taken possession of him, and he hath no pleasure save to fill, to swill, and to call for more. — Alas!" said he, looking at Athelstane with compassion, "that so dull a spirit should be lodged in so goodly a form! Alas! that such an enterprize as the regeneration of England should turn on a hinge so imperfect! Wedded to Rowena, indeed, her nobler and more generous soul may yet awake the better nature which is torpid within him. Yet how should this be, while Rowena, Athelstane, and I myself, remain the prisoners of this brutal marauder, and have been made so perhaps from a sense of the dangers, which our liberty might bring to the usurped power of his nation?"

While the Saxon was plunged in these painful reflections, the door of their prison opened, and gave entrance to a sewer, holding his white rod of office. This important person advanced into the chamber with a grave pace, followed by four attendants, bearing in a table covered with dishes, the sight and smell of which seemed to be an instant compensation to Athelstane for the inconvenience he had undergone. All the persons who attended on the feast were masked and cloaked.

"What mummary is this?" said Cedric;



“think you that we are ignorant whose prisoners we are, when we are in the castle of your master? Tell him,” he continued, willing to use this opportunity to open a negociation for his freedom, — “Tell your master, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, that we know no reason he can have for withholding our liberty, excepting his unlawful desire to enrich himself at our expence. Tell him that we yield to his rapacity, as in similar circumstances we should do to that of a literal robber. Let him name the ransom at which he rates our liberty, and it shall be paid, providing the exaction is suited to our means.”

The sewer made no answer, but bowed his head.

“And tell Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,” said Athelstane, “that I send him my mortal defiance, and challenge him to combat with me, on foot or horseback, at any secure place, within eight days after our liberation, which, if he be a true knight, he will not, under these circumstances, venture to refuse or to delay.”

“I shall deliver to the knight your defiance,” answered the sewer; “meanwhile I leave you to your food.”

The challenge of Athelstane was delivered with no good grace; for a large mouthful, which required the exercise of both jaws at once, added to a natural hesitation, considerably damped the



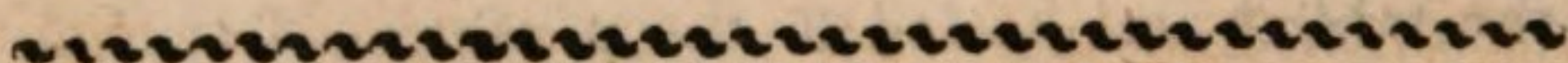
effect of the bold defiance it contained. Still, however, his speech was hailed by Cedric as an incontestible token of reviving spirit in his companion, whose previous indifference had begun, notwithstanding his respect for Athelstane's descent, to wear out his patience. But he now cordially shook hands with him in token of his approbation, and was somewhat grieved when Athelstane observed, "that he would fight a dozen such men as Front-de-Bœuf, if, by so doing, he could hasten his departure from a dungeon where they put so much garlick into their pottage." Notwithstanding this intimation of a relapse into the apathy of sensuality, Cedric placed himself opposite to Athelstane, and soon showed, that if the distresses of his country could banish the recollection of food while the table was uncovered, yet no sooner were the victuals put there, than he proved that the appetite of his Saxon ancestors had descended to him along with their other qualities.

The captives had not long enjoyed their refreshment, however, ere their attention was disturbed even from this most serious occupation by the blast of a horn winded before the gate. It was repeated three times, with as much violence as if it had been blown before an enchanted castle by the destined knight, at whose summons halls and towers, barbican and battlement, were to roll off like a morning vapour. The Saxons started from



the table, and hasted to the window. But their curiosity was disappointed; for these outlets only looked upon the court of the castle, and the sound came from beyond its precincts. The summons, however, seemed of importance, for a considerable degree of bustle seemed instantly to take place in the castle.





## CHAPTER XXII.

*My daughter — O my ducats — O my daughter!*  
*— — — — O my Christian ducats!*  
*Justice — the Law — my ducats, and my*  
*daughter!*

*Merchant of Venice.*

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LEAVING the Saxon chiefs to return to their banquet so soon as their ungratified curiosity should permit them to attend to the calls of their half-satiated appetite, we have to look in upon the yet more severe imprisonment of Isaac of York. The poor Jew had been hastily thrust into a dungeon-vault of the castle, the floor of which was deep beneath the level of the ground, and very damp, being lower than even the moat



itself. The only light was received through one or two loop-holes far above the reach of the captive's hand. These apertures admitted, even at mid-day, but a dim and uncertain light, which was changed for utter darkness long before the rest of the castle had lost the blessing of day. Chains and shackles, which had been the portion of former captives, from whom active exertions at escape had been apprehended, hung rusted and empty on the walls of the prison; and in the rings of one of those sets of fetters there remained two mouldering bones, which seemed to have been once those of the human leg, as if some prisoner had been left not only to perish there, but to be consumed to a skeleton.

At one end of this ghastly apartment was a large fire-grate, over the top of which were stretched some transverse iron bars, half devoured with rust.

The whole appearance of the dungeon might have appalled a stouter heart than that of Isaac, who, nevertheless, was more composed under the imminent pressure of danger, than he had seemed to be while affected by terrors, of which the cause was as yet remote and contingent. The lovers of the chase say, that the hare feels more agony during the pursuit of the greyhounds, than when she



is absolutely struggling in their fangs.\* And thus it is probable, that the Jews, by the very frequency of their fear on all occasions, had their minds in some degree prepared for every effort of tyranny which could be practised upon them; so that no aggression, when it had taken place, could bring with it that surprise which is the most disabling quality of terror. Neither was it the first time that Isaac had been placed in circumstances so dangerous. He had therefore experience to guide him, as well as hope, that he might again, as formerly, be delivered as a prey from the fowler. Above all, he had upon his side the unyielding obstinacy of his nation, and that unbending resolution, with which they have been frequently known to submit to the uttermost evils which power and violence can inflict upon them, rather than gratify their oppressors by granting their demands.

In this humour of passive resistance, and with his garment collected beneath him to keep his

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\* *Nota Bene.* — We by no means warrant the accuracy of this piece of natural history, which we give on the authority of the War-dour MS.



limbs from the wet pavement, Isaac sat in a corner of his dungeon, where his folded hands, his dishevelled hair and beard, his furred cloak and high cap, seen by the wiry and broken light, would have afforded a study for Rembrandt, had that celebrated painter existed at the period. The Jew remained, without altering this position, for nearly three hours, at the expiry of which steps were heard on the dungeon stair. The bolts screamed as they were withdrawn — the hinges creaked as the wicket opened, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, followed by the two Saracen slaves of the Templar, entered the prison.

Front-de-Bœuf, a tall and strong man, whose life had been spent in public war or in private feuds and broils, and who had hesitated at no means of extending his feudal power, had features corresponding to his character, and which strongly expressed the fiercer and more malignant passions of the mind. The scars with which his visage was seamed would, on features of a different cast, have excited the sympathy and veneration due to the marks of honourable valour; but, in the peculiar case of Front-de-Bœuf, they only added to the ferocity of his countenance, and to the dread which his presence inspired. This formidable baron was clad in a leathern doublet, fitted



close to his body, which was frayed and soiled with the stains of his armour. He had no weapon, excepting a poniard at his belt, which served to counterbalance the weight of the bunch of rusty keys that hung at his right side.

The black slaves who attended Front-de-Bœuf were stripped of their gorgeous apparel, and attired in jerkins and trowsers of coarse linen, their sleeves being tucked up above the elbow, like those of butchers when about to exercise their function in the slaughter-house. Each had in his hand a small panier; and, when they entered the dungeon, they stopt at the door until Front-de-Bœuf himself carefully locked and double-locked it. Having taken this precaution, he advanced slowly up the apartment towards the Jew, upon whom he kept his eye fixed, as if he wished to paralyze him with his glance, as some animals are said to fascinate their prey. It seemed indeed as if the sullen and malignant eye of Front-de-Bœuf possessed some portion of that supposed power over his unfortunate prisoner. The Jew sate a-gape, his eyes fixed on the savage baron with such earnestness of terror, that his frame seemed literally to shrink together, and to diminish in size under his fixed and baleful gaze. The unhappy Isaac was deprived not

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only of the power of rising to make the obeisance which his terror dictated, but he could not even doff his cap, or utter any word of supplication, so strongly was he agitated by the conviction that tortures and death were impending over him.

On the other hand, the stately form of the Norman appeared to dilate in magnitude, like that of the eagle, which ruffles up its plumage when about to pounce on its defenceless prey. He paused within three steps of the corner in which the unfortunate Jew had now, as it were, coiled himself up into the smallest possible space, and made a sign for one of the slaves to approach. The black satellite came forward accordingly, and, producing from his basket a large pair of scales and several weights, he laid them at the feet of Front-de-Bœuf, and again retired to the respectful distance at which his companion had already taken his station.

The motions of these men were slow and solemn, as if there impended over their souls some preconception of horror and of cruelty. Front-de-Bœuf himself opened the scene, by thus addressing his ill-fated captive.

“Most accursed dog of an accursed race,” he said, awaking with his deep and sullen voice the



sullen echoes of his dungeon vault, "seest thou these scales?"

The unhappy Jew returned a feeble affirmative.

"In these very scales shalt thou weigh me out," said the relentless baron, "a thousand silver pounds, after the just measure and weight of the Tower of London."

"Holy Abraham!" returned the Jew, finding voice through the very extremity of his danger, "heard man ever such a demand? — Who ever heard, even in a minstrel's tale, of such a sum as a thousand pounds of silver? — What human sight was ever blessed with the vision of such a mass of treasure? — Not within the walls of York, ransack my house and that of all my tribe, wilt thou find the huge sum of silver that thou speakest of."

"I am reasonable," answered Front-de-Bœuf, "and, if silver be scant, I refuse not gold. At the rate of a mark of gold for each six pounds of silver, thou shalt free thy unbelieving carcass from such punishment as thy heart has never even conceived."

"Have mercy on me, noble knight!" said Isaac, "I am old, and poor, and helpless. It



were unworthy to triumph over me — It is a poor deed to crush a worm.”

“Old thou may’st be,” replied the knight; “more shame to their folly who have suffered thee to grow grey in usury and knavery — Feeble thou mayest be, for when had a Jew either heart or hand — But rich it is well known thou art.”

“I swear to you, noble knight,” said the Jew, “by all which I believe, and by all which we believe in common” — —

“Perjure not thyself,” said the Norman, interrupting him, “and let not thine obstinacy seal thy doom, until thou hast seen and well considered the fate that awaits thee. Think not I speak to thee only to excite thy terror, and practise on the base cowardice thou hast derived from thy tribe — I swear to thee by that which thou dost not believe, by the Gospel which our church teaches, and by the keys which are given her to bind and to loose, that my purpose is deep and peremptory. This dungeon is no place for trifling. Prisoners ten thousand times more distinguished than thou have died within these walls, and their fate hath never been known. But for thee is reserved a long and lingering death, to which theirs were luxury.”



He again made a signal for the slaves to approach, and spoke to them apart, in their own language, for he also had been in Palestine, where, perhaps, he had learnt his lesson of cruelty. The Saracens produced from their baskets a quantity of charcoal, a pair of bellows, and a flask of oil. While the one struck a light with a flint and steel, the other disposed the charcoal in the large rusty grate which we have already mentioned, and exercised the bellows until the fuel came to a red glow.

“Seest thou, Isaac,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “the range of iron bars above that glowing charcoal? — on that warm couch thou shalt lie, stripped of thy clothes as if thou wert to rest on a bed of down. One of these slaves shall maintain the fire beneath thee, while the other shall anoint thy wretched limbs with oil, lest the roast should burn. — Now, choose betwixt such a scorching bed and the payment of a thousand pounds of silver; for, by the head of my father, thou hast no other option.”

“It is impossible,” said the unfortunate Jew, “it is impossible that your purpose can be real! The good God of nature never made a heart capable of exercising such cruelty.”



“Trust not to that, Isaac,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “it were a fatal error. Doest thou think that I, who have seen a town sacked, in which thousands of my Christian countrymen perished by sword, by flood, and by fire, will blench from my purpose for the outcries or screams of one single wretched Jew? — or think’st thou that these swarthy slaves, who have neither law, country, nor conscience, but their master’s will — who use the poison, or the stake, or the poniard, or the cord, at his slightest wink — thinkest thou that they will have mercy, who do not even understand the language in which it is asked? — Be wise, old man; discharge thyself of a portion of thy superfluous wealth; repay to the hands of a Christian a part of what thou hast acquired by the usury thou hast practised on those of his religion. Thy cunning may soon swell out once more thy shrivelled purse, but neither leach nor medicine can restore thy scorched hide and flesh wert thou once stretched on these bars. Tell down thy ransom, I say, and rejoice that at such a rate thou can’st redeem thee from a dungeon, the secrets of which few have returned to tell. I waste no more words with thee — choose between thy dross and thy flesh and blood, and as thou choolest, so shall it be.”



“So may Abraham, Jacob, and all the fathers of our people assist me,” said Isaac, “I cannot make the choice, because I have not the means of satisfying your exorbitant demand.”

“Seize him, and strip him, slaves,” said the Knight, “and let the fathers of his race assist him if they can.”

The assistants, taking their directions more from the Baron's eye and his hand than his tongue, once more stepped forward, laid hands on the unfortunate Isaac, plucked him up from the ground, and holding him between them, waited the hard-hearted Baron's farther signal. The unhappy Jew eyed their countenances and that of Front-de-Bœuf, in hope of discovering some symptoms of relenting; but that of the Baron exhibited the same cold, half-sullen, half-sarcastic smile which had been the prelude to his cruelty; and the savage eye of the Saracens, rolling gloomy under their dark brows, acquiring a yet more sinister expression by the whiteness of the circle which surrounds the pupil, evinced rather the secret pleasure which they expected from the approaching scene, than any reluctance to be its directors or agents. The Jew then looked at the glowing furnace, over which he was presently to



be stretched, and, seeing no chance of his tormentor's relenting, his resolution gave way.

“I will pay,” he said, “the thousand pounds of silver — That is,” he added, after a moment's pause, “I will pay it with the help of my brethren, for I must beg as a mendicant at the door of our synagogue ere I make up so unheard of a sum. — When and where must it be delivered?”

“Here,” replied Front-de-Bœuf, “here it must be delivered — weighed it must be — weighed and told down on this very dungeon floor. — Thinkest thou I will part with thee until thy ransom is secure?”

“And what is to be my surety,” said the Jew, “that I shall be at liberty after this ransom is paid?”

“The word of a Norman noble, thou pawn-broking slave,” answered Front-de-Bœuf; “the faith of a Norman nobleman, more pure than the gold and silver of thee and all thy tribe.”

“I crave pardon, noble lord,” said Isaac timidly, “but wherefore should I rely wholly on the word of one who will trust nothing to mine?”



“Because thou can’st not help it, Jew,” said the knight, sternly. “Wert thou now in thy treasure-chamber at York, and were I craving a loan of thy shekels, it would be thine to dictate the time of payment, and the pledge of security. This is *my* treasure-chamber. Here I have thee at advantage, nor will I again deign to repeat the terms on which I grant thee liberty.”

The Jew groaned deeply. — “Grant me,” he said, “at least, with my own liberty, that of the companions with whom I travel. They scorned me as a Jew, yet they pitied my desolation, and because they tarried to aid me by the way, a share of my evil hath come upon them; moreover, they may contrihute in some sort to my ransom.”

“If thou meanest yonder Saxon churls,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “their ransom will depend upon other terms than thine. Mind thine own concerns, Jew, I warn thee, and meddle not with those of others.”

“I am then,” said Isaac, “only to be set at liberty, together with mine wounded friend?”

“Shall I twice recommend it,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “to a son of Israel, to meddle with his own concerns, and leave those of others alone? — Since thou hast made thy choice, it remains



but that thou pay'st down thy ransom, and that at a short day."

"Yet hear me," said the Jew — "for the sake of that very wealth which thou would'st obtain at the expence of thy" — — Here he stopt short, afraid of irritating the savage Norman. But Front-de-Bœuf only laughed, and himself filled up the blank at which the Jew had hesitated. "At the expence of my conscience, thou would'st say, Isaac, speak it out — I tell thee, I am reasonable. I can bear the reproaches of a loser, even when that loser is a Jew. Thou wert not so patient, Isaac, when thou did'st invoke justice against Jacques Fitzdotterel, for calling thee a usurious blood-sucker, when thy exactions had devoured his patrimony."

"I swear by the Talmud," said the Jew, "that your valour has been misled in that matter. Fitzdotterel drew his poniard upon me in mine own chamber, because I braved him for mine own silver. The term of payment was due at the Passover."

"I care not what he did," said Front-de-Bœuf; "the question is, when shall I have mine own? — when shall I have the shekels, Isaac?"

"Let my daughter Rebecca go forth to York," answered Isaac, "with your safe conduct, noble



knight, and so soon as man and horse can return, the treasure" — — Here he groaned deeply, but added, after the pause of a few seconds, — "The treasure shall be told down on this very floor."

"Thy daughter!" said Front-de-Bœuf, as if surprised, — "By heavens, Isaac, I would I had known of this. I deemed that yonder black-browed girl had been thy concubine, and I gave her to be a handmaiden to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, after the fashion of patriarchs and heroes of the days of old, who set us in these matters a wholesome example."

The yell which Isaac raised at this unfeeling communication made the very vault to ring, and astounded the two Saracens so much that they let go their hold of the Jew. He availed himself of his enlargement to throw himself on the pavement, and clasp the knees of Front-de-Bœuf.

"Take all that you have asked," said he, "Sir Knight — take ten times more — reduce me to ruin and to beggary, if thou wilt, — nay, pierce me with that poniard, broil me on that furnace, but spare my daughter, deliver her in safety and honour! — As thou art born of woman, spare the honour of a helpless maiden — She is the image



of my deceased Rachael, she is the last of six pledges of her love — Will you deprive a widowed husband of his sole remaining comfort? — Will you reduce a father to wish that his only living child was laid beside her dead mother, in the tomb of our fathers?"

"I would," said the Norman, somewhat relenting, "that I had known of this before. I thought your race had loved nothing save their money-bags."

"Think not so humbly of us," said Isaac, eager to improve the moment of apparent sympathy; "the hunted fox, the tortured wild-cat, loves its young — the despised and persecuted race of Abraham love their children."

"Be it so," said Front-de-Bœuf; "I will believe it in future, Isaac, for thy very sake — But it aids us not now. I cannot help what has happened, or what is to follow; my word is passed to my comrade in arms, nor would I break it for ten Jews and Jewesses to boot. Besides, why shouldst thou think evil is to come to the girl, even if she became Bois-Guilbert's booty?"

"There will, there must," exclaimed Isaac, wringing his hands in agony; "when did Templars breathe aught but cruelty to men and dishonour to women?"



“Dog of an infidel,” said Front-de-Bœuf, with sparkling eyes, and not sorry, perhaps, to seize a pretext for working himself into a passion, “blaspheme not the Holy Order of the Temple of Zion, but take thought instead to pay me the ransom thou hast promised, or woe betide thy Jewish throat.”

“Robber and villain!” said the Jew, retorting the insults of his oppressor with passion, which, however impotent, he now found it impossible to bridle, “I will pay thee nothing — not one silver penny will I pay thee, unless my daughter is delivered to me.”

“Art thou in thy senses, Israelite?” said the Norman, sternly — “Has thy flesh and blood a charm against heated iron and scalding oil?”

“I care not!” said the Jew, rendered desperate by paternal affection; “do thy worst. My daughter is my flesh and blood, dearer to me a thousand times than those limbs which thy cruelty threatens. No silver will I give thee, unless I were to pour it molten down thy avaricious throat — no, not a silver penny will I give thee, Nazarene, were it to save thee from the deep damnation thy whole life has merited! Take my life if thou wilt, and say, the Jew, amidst his tortures, knew how to disappoint the Christian.”



“We shall see that,” said Front-de-Bœuf; “for by the blessed rood, which is the abomination of thy accursed tribe, thou shalt feel the extremities of fire and steel. — Strip him, slaves, and chain him down upon the bars.”

In spite of the feeble struggles of the old man, the Saracens had already torn from him his upper garment, and were proceeding totally to disrobe him, when the sound of a bugle twice winded without the castle, penetrated even to the recesses of the dungeon, and immediately after, voices were heard calling for Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. Unwilling to be found engaged in his hellish occupation, the savage Baron gave the slaves a signal to restore Isaac's garment, and, quitting the dungeon with his attendants, he left the Jew to thank God for his own deliverance, or to lament over his daughter's captivity, and probable fate, as his personal or parental feelings might prove strongest.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

*Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words  
Can no way move you to a milder form,  
I'll woo you, like a soldier, at arms' end,  
And love you 'gainst the nature of love.*

*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*  

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THE apartment to which the Lady Rowena had been introduced was fitted up with some rude attempts at ornament and magnificence, and her being placed there might be considered as a peculiar mark of respect not offered to the other prisoners. But the wife of Front-de-Bœuf, for whom it had been originally furnished, was long dead, and decay and neglect had impaired the few ornaments with which her taste had adorned it. The tapestry hung down from the walls in many places, and



in others was tarnished and faded under the effects of the sun, or tattered and decayed by age. Desolate, however, as it was, this was the apartment of the castle which had been judged most fitting for the accommodation of the Saxon heiress; and here she was left to meditate upon her fate, until the actors in this nefarious drama had arranged the several parts which each of them was to perform. This had been settled in a council held by Front-de-Bœuf, Bracy, and the Templar, in which, after a long and warm debate concerning the several advantages which each insisted upon deriving from his peculiar share in this audacious enterprize, they had at length determined the fate of their unhappy prisoners.

It was about the hour of noon, therefore, when De Bracy, for whose advantage the expedition had been first planned, appeared, to prosecute his views upon the hand and possessions of the Lady Rowena.

The interval had not entirely been bestowed in holding council with his confederates, for De Bracy had found leisure to decorate his person with all the foppery of the times. His green cassock and vizard were now flung aside. His long luxuriant hair was trained to flow in quaint



tresses down his richly furred cloak. His beard was closely shaved, his doublet reached to the middle of his leg, and the girdle which secured it, and at the same time supported his ponderous sword, was embroidered and embossed with gold work. We have already noticed the extravagant fashion of the shoes at this period, and the points of Maurice De Bracy's might have challenged the prize of extravagance with the gayest, being turned up and twisted like the horns of a ram. Such was the dress of a gallant of the period; and in the present instance, that effect was aided by the handsome person and good demeanour of the wearer, whose manners partook alike of the grace of a courtier, and the frankness of a soldier.

He saluted Rowena by doffing his velvet bonnet, garnished with a golden broach, representing St Michael trampling down the Prince of Evil. With this, he gently motioned the lady to a seat; and, as she still retained her standing posture, the knight ungloved his right hand, and proffered to conduct her thither. But Rowena declined, by her gesture, the proffered compliment, and replied, "If I be in the presence of my jailor, Sir Knight — nor will circumstances allow me to think otherwise — it best becomes his



prisoner to remain standing till she learns her doom."

"Alas! fair Rowena," returned De Bracy, "you are in presence of your captive, not your jailor, and it is from your fair eyes that De Bracy must receive that doom which you fondly expect from him."

"I know you not, sir," said the lady, drawing herself up with all the pride of offended rank and beauty; "I know you not — and the insolent familiarity with which you apply to me the jargon of a troubadour, forms no apology for the violence of a robber."

"To thyself, fair maid," answered De Bracy, in his former tone — "to thine own charms be ascribed whate'er I have done which passed the respect due to her, whom I have chosen queen of my heart and loadstar of my eyes."

"I repeat to you, Sir Knight, that I know you not, and that no man wearing chain and spurs ought thus to intrude himself upon the presence of an unprotected lady."

"That I am unknown to you," said De Bracy, "is indeed my misfortune; yet let me hope



that De Bracy's name has not been always unspoken, when minstrels or heralds have praised deeds of chivalry, whether in the lists or in the battle-field."

"To heralds and to minstrels, then, leave thy praise, Sir Knight," replied Rowena, "more suiting for their mouths than for thine own; and tell me which of them shall record in song, or in book of tourney, the memorable conquest of this night, a conquest obtained over an old man, followed by a few timid hinds; and its booty, an unfortunate maiden, transported against her will to the castle of a robber."

"You are unjust, Lady Rowena," said the knight, biting his lips in some confusion, and speaking in a tone more natural to him than that of affected gallantry, which he had at first adopted; "yourself free from passion, you can allow no excuse for the frenzy of another, although caused by your own beauty."

"I pray you, Sir Knight," said Rowena, "to cease a language so commonly used by strolling minstrels, that it becomes not the mouth of knights or nobles. Certes, you constrain me to sit down, since you enter upon such common-place terms,



of which each vile crowder hath a stock that might last from hence to Christmas."

"Proud damsel," said De Bracy, incensed at finding his gallant style procured him nothing but contempt — "proud damsel, thou shalt be as proudly encountered. Know then, that I have supported my pretensions to your hand in the way that best suited my character. It is meeter for thy humour to be wooed with bow and bill, than in set terms, and in courtly language."

"Courtesy of tongue," said Rowena, "when it is used to veil churlishness of deed, is but a knight's girdle around the breast of a base clown. I wonder not that the restraint appears to gall you — more it were for your honour to have retained the dress and language of an outlaw, than to veil the deeds of one under an affectation of gentle language and demeanour."

"You counsel well, lady," said De Bracy; "and in the bold language which best justifies bold actions, I tell thee, thou shalt never leave this castle, or thou shalt leave it as Maurice De Bracy's wife. I am not wont to be baffled in my enterprizes, nor needs a Norman noble scrupulously vindicate his conduct to the Saxon maiden whom he distinguishes by the offer of his hand;



Thou art proud, Rowena, and thou art the fitter to be my wife. By what other means couldst thou be raised to high honour and to princely place, saving by my alliance? How else wouldst thou escape from the mean precincts of a country grange, where Saxons herd with the swine which form their wealth, to take thy seat, honoured as thou shouldst be, amid all in England that is distinguished by beauty, or dignified by power?"

"Sir Knight," replied Rowena, "the grange which you contemn has been my shelter from infancy; and, trust me, when I leave it — should that day ever arrive — it shall be with one who has not learnt to despise the dwelling and manners in which I have been brought up."

"I guess your meaning, lady," said De Bracy, "though you may think it lies too obscure for my apprehension. But dream not, that Richard Cœur de Lion will ever resume his throne, far less that Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, his minion, will ever lead thee to his footstool, to be there welcomed as the bride of a favourite. Another suitor might feel jealousy while he touched this string; but my firm purpose cannot be changed by a passion so childish and so hopeless. Know, lady, that this rival is in my power, and that it rests but



with me to betray the secret of his being within the castle of Front-de-Bœuf, whose jealousy will be more fatal than mine."

"Wilfrid, here?" said Rowena, in disdain; "that is as true as that Front-de-Bœuf is his rival."

De Bracy looked at her steadily for an instant; "Wert thou really ignorant of this?" said he; "didst thou not know that he travelled in the litter of the Jew? — a meet conveyance for the crusader, whose doughty arm was to reconquer the Holy Sepulchre!" And he laughed scornfully.

"And if he *is* here," said Rowena, compelling herself to a tone of indifference, though trembling with an agony of apprehension which she could not suppress, "in what is he the rival of Front-de-Bœuf? or what has he to fear beyond a short imprisonment, and a honourable ransom, according to the use of chivalry?"

"Rowena," said de Bracy, "art thou, too, deceived by the common error of thy sex, who think there can be no rivalry but that respecting their own charms? Knowest thou not there is a jealousy of ambition and of wealth, as well as of love; and that this our host, Front-de-Bœuf, will push



from his road him who opposes his claim to the fair barony of Ivanhoe, as readily, eagerly, and unscrupulously, as if he were preferred to him by some blue-eyed damsel? But smile on my suit, lady, and the wounded champion shall have nothing to fear from Front-de-Bœuf, whom else thou may'st mourn for, as in the hands of one who has never shewn compassion."

"Save him, for the love of Heaven!" said Rowena, her firmness giving way under terror for her lover's impending fate.

"I can — I will — it is my purpose," said De Bracy; "for, when Rowena consents to be the bride of De Bracy, who is it shall dare to put forth a violent hand upon her kinsman — the son of her guardian — the companion of her youth? But it is thy love must buy his protection. I am not romantic fool enough to further the fortune, or avert the fate, of one who is likely to be a successful obstacle between me and my wishes. Use thine influence with me in his behalf, and he is safe; refuse to employ it, Wilfrid dies, and thou thyself art not the nearer to freedom."

"Thy language," answered Rowena, "hath in its indifferent bluntness something which cannot be reconciled with the horrors it seems to ex-



press. I believe not that thy purpose is so wicked, or thy power so great."

"Flatter thyself, then, with that belief," said De Bracy, "until time shall prove it false. Thy lover lies wounded in this castle — thy preferred lover. He is a bar betwixt Front-de-Bœuf and that which Front-de-Bœuf loves better than either ambition or beauty. What will it cost beyond the blow of a poniard, or the thrust of a javelin, to silence his opposition for ever? Nay, were Front-de-Bœuf afraid to justify a deed so open, let the leach but give his patient a wrong draught — let the chamberlain, or the nurse who tends him, but pluck the pillow from his head, and Wilfrid, in his present condition, is sped without the effusion of blood. Cedric also" —

"Aud Cedric also," said Rowena, repeating his words; "my noble — my generous guardian! I deserved the evil I have encountered, for forgetting his fate even in that of his son."

"Cedric's fate also depends upon thy determination," said De Bracy; "and I leave thee to form it."

Hitherto, Rowena had sustained her part in this trying scene with undismayed courage, but



it was because she had not considered the danger as serious and imminent. Her disposition was naturally that which physiognomists consider as proper to fair complexions, mild, timid, and gentle; but it had been tempered, and, as it were, hardened, by the circumstances of her education. Accustomed to see the will of all, even of Cedric himself, (sufficiently arbitrary with others) give way before her wishes, she had acquired that sort of courage and self-confidence which arises from the habitual and constant deference of the circle in which we move. She could scarce conceive the possibility of her will being opposed, far less that of its being treated with total disregard.

Her haughtiness and habit of domination was, therefore, a fictitious character, induced over that which was natural to her, and it deserted her when her eyes were opened to the extent of her own danger, as well as that of her lover and her guardian; and when she found her will, the slightest expression of which went to command respect and attention, was now placed in opposition to that of a man of a strong, fierce, and determined mind, who possessed the advantage over her, and was resolved to use it.

After casting her eyes around, as if to look for the aid which was nowhere to be found, and after



a few broken interjections, she raised her hands to heaven, and burst into a passion of uncontrolled vexation and sorrow. It was impossible to see so beautiful a creature in such extremity without feeling for her, and De Bracy was not unmoved, though he was yet more embarrassed than touched. He had, in truth, gone too far to recede; and yet, in Rowena's present condition, she could not be acted on either by argument or threats. He paced the apartment to and fro, now vainly exhorting the terrified maiden to compose herself, now hesitating concerning his own line of conduct.

If, thought he, I should be moved by the tears and sorrow of this disconsolate damsel, what would I reap but the loss of those fair hopes for which I have encountered so much risk, and the ridicule of Prince John and his jovial comrades? "And yet," he said to himself, "I feel myself ill framed for the part which I am playing. I cannot look on so fair a face while it is disturbed with agony, or on those eyes when they are drowned in tears. I would she had retained her original haughtiness of disposition, or that I had a larger share of Front-de-Bœuf's thrice-tempered hardness of heart."

Agitated by these thoughts, he could only bid



the unfortunate Rowena he comforted, and assure her, that as yet she had no reason for the excess of despair to which she was now giving way. But in this task of consolation De Bracy was interrupted by the horn, „hoarse-winded blowing far and keen,” which had at the same time alarmed the other inmates of the castle, and interrupted their several plans of avarice and of licence. Of them all, perhaps, De Bracy least regretted the interruption; for his conference with the Lady Rowena had arrived at a point, where he found it equally difficult to prosecute or to resign his enterprize.

And here we cannot but think it necessary to offer some better proof than the incidents of an idle tale, to vindicate the melancholy representation of manners which has been just laid before the reader. It is grievous to think that those valiant barons, to whose stand against the crown the liberties of England were indebted for their existence, should themselves have been such dreadful oppressors, and capable of excesses contrary not only to the laws of England, but to those of nature and humanity. But, alas! we have only to extract from the industrious Henry one of those numerous passages which he has collected from contemporary historians, to prove



that fiction itself can hardly reach the dark reality of the horrors of the period.

The description given by the author of the Saxon Chronicle of the cruelties exercised in the reign of King Stephen by the great barons and lords of castles, who were all Normans, affords a strong proof of the excesses of which they were capable when their passions were inflamed. "They grievously oppressed the poor people by building castles; and when they were built, they filled them with wicked men, or rather devils, who seized both men and women who they imagined had any money, threw them into prison, and put them to more cruel tortures than the martyrs ever endured. They suffocated some in mud, and suspended others by the feet, or the head or the thumbs, kindling fires below them. They squeezed the heads of some with knotted cords till they pierced their brains, while they threw others into dungeons swarming with serpents, snakes, and toads." \* But it would be cruel to put the reader to the pain of perusing the remainder of this description.

As another instance of these bitter fruits of

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\* Henry's Hist. edit. 1805, vol. vii. p. 346.



conquest, and perhaps the strongest that can be quoted, we may mention, that the Empress Matilda, though a daughter of the King of Scotland, and afterwards both Queen of England and Empress of Germany, the daughter, the wife, and the mother of monarchs, was obliged, during her early residence for education in England, to assume the veil of a nun, as the only means of escaping the licentious pursuit of the Norman nobles. This excuse she stated before a great council of the clergy of England, as the sole reason for her having taken the religious habit. The assembled clergy admitted the validity of the plea, and the notoriety of the circumstances upon which it was founded; giving thus an indubitable and most remarkable testimony to the existence of that disgraceful licence by which that age was stained. It was a matter of public knowledge, they said, that after the conquest of King William, his Norman followers, elated by so great a victory, acknowledged no law but their own wicked pleasure, and not only despoiled the conquered Saxons of their lands and their goods, but invaded the honour of their wives and of their daughters with the most unbridled licence; and hence it was then common for matrons and maidens of noble families to assume the veil, and take shelter in convents, not as called thither by the vocation of



Cod, but solely to preserve their honour from the unbridled wickedness of man.

Such and so licentious were the times, as announced by the public declaration of the assembled clergy, recorded by Eadmer; and we need add nothing more to vindicate the probability of the scenes which we have detailed, and are about to detail, upon the more apocryphal authority of the Wardour MS.



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## CHAPTER XXIV.

*I'll woo her as the lion wooes his bride.*

*Douglas.*

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WHILE the scenes we have described were passing in other parts of the castle, the Jewess Rebecca awaited her fate in a distant and sequestered turret. Hither she had been led by two of her disguised ravishers, and on being thrust into the little cell, she found herself in the presence of an old sybil, who kept murmuring to herself a Saxon rhyme, as if to bear time to the revolving dance which her spindle was performing upon the floor. The hag raised her head as Rebecca entered, and scowled at the fair Jewess with the malignant envy with which



old age and ugliness, when united with evil conditions, are apt to look upon youth and beauty.

“Thou must up and away, old house-cricket,” said one of the men; “our noble master commands it — Thou must leave this chamber to a fairer guest.”

“Ay,” grumbled the hag, “even thus is service requited. I have known when my bare word would have cast the best man-at-arms among ye out of saddle and out of service; and now must I up and away at the command of every groom such as thou.”

“Good Dame Urfried,” said the other man, “stand not to reason on it, but up and away. Lords’ hests must be listened to with a quick ear. Thou hast had thy day, old dame, but thy sun has long been set. Thou art now the very emblem of an old war-horse turned out on the barren heath — thou hast had thy paces in thy time, but now a broken amble is the best of them — Come, amble off with thee.”

“Ill omens dog ye both!” said the old woman; “and a kennel be your burying-place! May the evil demon Zernebock, tear me limb



from limb, if I leave my own cell ere I have spun out the hemp on my distaff."

"Answer it to our lord, then, old house-fiend," said the man, and retired; leaving Rebecca in company with the old woman, upon whose presence she had been thus unwillingly forced.

"What devil's deed have they now in the wind?" said the old hag, murmuring to herself, yet from time to time casting a sidelong and malignant glance at Rebecca; "but it is easy to guess — Bright eyes, black locks, and a skin like paper, ere the priest stains it with his black unguent — Ay, it is easy to guess why they send her to this lone turret, whence a shriek could no more be heard than at the depth of five hundred fathoms beneath the earth. Thou wilt have owls for thy neighbours, fair one; and their screams will be heard as far, and as much regarded as thine own. Outlandish, too," she said, marking the dress and turban of Rebecca — "What country art thou of? — a Saracen? or an Egyptian? — Why dost not answer? — thou can'st weep, can'st thou not speak?"

"Be not angry, good mother," said Rebecca.



“Thou need’st say no more,” replied Urfried; “men know a fox by the train, and a Jewess by her tongue.”

“For the sake of mercy,” said Rebecca, “tell me what I am to expect as the conclusion of the violence which hath dragged me hither! Is it my life they seek, to atone for my religion? I will lay it down cheerfully.”

“Thy life, minion?” answered the sybil; “what would taking thy life pleasure them? — Trust me thy life is in no peril. Such usage shalt thou have as was once thought good enough for a noble Saxon maiden. And shall a Jewess, like thee, repine because she hath no better? Look at me — I was as young and twice as fair as thou when Front-de-Bœuf, father of this Reginald, and his Normans, stormed this castle. My father and his seven sons defended their inheritance from storey to storey, from chamber to chamber — There was not a room, not a step of the stair, that was not slippery with their blood. They died — they died every man; and ere their bodies were cold, and ere their blood was dried, I had become the prey and the scorn of the conqueror!”



“Is there no help? — Are there no means of escape?” said Rebecca — “Richly, richly would I requite thine aid!”

“Think not of it,” said the hag; “from hence there is no escape but through the gates of death; and it is late, late,” she added, shaking her grey head, “ere these open to us — Yet it is comfort to think that we leave behind us on earth those who shall be wretched as ourselves. Fare thee well, Jewess! — Jew or Gentile, thy fate would be the same; for thou hast to do with them that have neither scruple nor pity. Fare thee well, I say. My thread is spun out — thy task is yet to begin.”

“Stay! stay! for Heaven’s sake!” said Rebecca; “stay, though it be to curse and to revile me — thy presence is yet some protection.”

“The presence of the mother of God were no protection,” answered the old woman. “There she stands,” pointing to a rude image of the Virgin Mary, “see if she can avert the fate that awaits thee.”

She left the room as she spoke, her features writhed into a sort of sneering laugh, which made



them seem even more hideous than their habitual frown. She locked the door behind her, and Rebecca might hear her curse every step for its steepness, as slowly and with difficulty she descended the turret-stair.

Rebecca was now to expect a fate even more dreadful than that of Rowena; for what probability was there that either softness or ceremony would be used towards one of her oppressed race, whatever shadow of these might be preserved towards a Saxon heiress? Yet had the Jewess this advantage, that she was better prepared by habits of thought, and by natural strength of mind, to encounter the dangers to which she was exposed. Of a strong and observing character, even from her earliest years, the pomp and wealth which her father displayed within his walls, or which she witnessed in the houses of other wealthy Hebrews, had not been able to blind her to the precarious circumstances under which they were enjoyed. Like Damocles at his celebrated banquet, Rebecca perpetually beheld, amid that gorgeous display, the sword which was suspended over the heads of her people by a single hair. These reflections had tamed and brought down to a pitch of sounder judgment a temper, which, under other circumstances,



might have waxed haughty, supercilious, and obstinate.

From her father's example and injunctions, Rebecca had learnt to bear herself courteously towards all who approached her. She could not indeed imitate his excess of subservience because she was a stranger to the meanness of mind, and to the constant state of timid apprehension, by which it was dictated; but she bore herself with a proud humility, as if submitting to the evil circumstances in which she was placed as the daughter of a despised race, while she felt in her mind the consciousness that she was entitled to hold a higher rank from her merit, than the arbitrary despotism of religious prejudice permitted her to aspire to.

Thus prepared to expect adverse circumstances, she had acquired the firmness necessary for acting under them. Her present situation required all her presence of mind, and she summoned it up accordingly.

Her first care was to inspect the apartment; but it afforded few hopes either of escape or protection. It contained neither secret passage nor trap-door, and unless where the door by



which she had entered joined the main building, seemed to be circumscribed by the round exterior wall of the turret. The door had no inside bolt or bar. The single window opened upon an embattled space surmounting the turret, which gave Rebecca, at first sight, some hopes of escaping; but she soon found it had no communication with any other part of the battlements, being an isolated bartisan or balcony, secured, as usual, by a parapet, with embrasures, at which a few archers might be stationed, for defending the turret, and flanking with their shot the wall of the castle on that side.

There was therefore no hope but in passive fortitude, and in that strong reliance on heaven natural to great and generous characters. Rebecca, however erroneously taught to interpret the promises of Scripture to the chosen people of heaven, did not err in supposing the present to be their hour of trial, or in trusting that the children of Zion would be one day called in with the fulness of the Gentiles. In the meanwhile, all around her showed that their present state was that of punishment and probation, and that it was their especial duty to suffer without sinning. Thus prepared to consider herself



as the victim of misfortune, Rebecca had early reflected upon her own state, and school'd her mind to meet the dangers which she had probably to encounter.

The prisoner trembled, however, and changed colour, when a step was heard on the stair, and the door of the turret chamber slowly opened, and a tall man, dressed as one of those banditti to whom they owed their misfortune, slowly entered, and secured the door behind him; his cap, pulled down upon his brows, concealed the upper part of his face, and he held his mantle in such a manner as to muffle the rest. In this guise, as if prepared for the execution of some deed at the thought of which he was himself ashamed, he stood before the affrighted prisoner; yet, ruffian as his dress bespoke him, he seemed at a loss to express what purpose had brought him thither, so that Rebecca, making an effort upon herself, had time to anticipate his explanation. She had already unclasped two costly bracelets and a collar, which she hastened to proffer to the supposed outlaw, concluding naturally that to gratify his avarice was to bespeak his favour.



“Take these,” she said, “good friend, and for God’s sake be merciful to me and to my aged father! Those ornaments are of value, yet are they trifling to what he would bestow to obtain our dismissal from this castle, free and uninjured.”

“Fair flower of Palestine,” replied the outlaw, “these pearls are orient, but they yield in whiteness to your teeth; the diamonds are brilliant, but they cannot match your eyes; and ever since I have taken up this wild trade, I have made a vow to prefer beauty to wealth.”

“Do not do yourself such wrong,” said Rebecca; “take ransom and have mercy! — Gold will purchase you pleasure, — to misuse us, could only bring you remorse. My father will willingly satiate thy utmost wishes; and if thou wilt act wisely, thou may’st purchase with our spoils thy restoration to civil society — may’st obtain pardon for past errors, and be placed beyond the necessity of committing more.”

“It is well spoken,” replied the outlaw in French, finding it difficult probably to sustain in Saxon a conversation which Rebecca had opened in that language; “but know, bright lily



of the vale of Bacca! that thy father is already in the hands of a powerful alchemist, who knows how to convert into gold and silver even the rusty bars of a dungeon grate. The venerable Isaac is subjected to an alembic, which will distil from him all he holds dear, without any assistance from my requests or thy entreaty. Thy ransom must be paid by love and beauty, and in no other coin will I accept it."

"Thou art no outlaw," said Rebecca, in the same language in which he addressed her; "no outlaw had refused such offers. No outlaw in this land uses the dialect in which thou hast spoken. Thou art no outlaw, but a Norman — a Norman, noble perhaps in birth — O be so in thy actions, and cast off this fearful masque of outrage and violence!"

"And thou, who canst guess so truly," said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, dropping the mantle from his face, "art no true daughter of Israel, but in all, save youth and beauty, a very witch of Endor. I am not an outlaw, then, fair rose of Sharon. And I am one who will be more prompt to hang thy neck and arms with pearls and diamonds, which so well become them, than to deprive thee of those ornaments."



“What would'st thou have of me,” said Rebecca, “if not my wealth? — We can have nought in common between us — you are a Christian — I am a Jewess. Our union were contrary to the laws, alike of the church, and the synagogue.”

“It were so indeed,” replied the Templar, laughing; “wed with a Jewess? *Despardieux!* — Not if she were the queen of Sheba. And know, besides, sweet daughter of Zion, that were the most Christian king to offer me his most Christian daughter with Languedoc for a dowry, I could not wed her. It is against my vow to love any maiden, otherwise than *par amours*, as I will love thee. I am a Templar. Behold the cross of my holy Order.”

“Darest thou appeal to it,” said Rebecca, “on an occasion like the present?”

“And if I do so,” said the Templar, “it concerns not thee, who art no believer in the blessed sign of our salvation.”

“I believe as my fathers taught,” said Rebecca; “and my God forgive my belief if erroneous! But you, Sir Knight, what is *yours*,



when you appeal without scruple to that which you deem most holy, even while you are about to transgress the most solemn of your vows as a knight, and as a man of religion?"

"It is gravely and well preached, O daughter of Sirach!" answered the Templar; "but, gentle Ecclesiastica, thy narrow Jewish prejudices make thee blind to our high privilege. Marriage were an enduring crime on the part of a Templar; but what lesser folly I may practise, I shall speedily be absolved from at the next Preceptory of our Order. Not the wisest of monarchs, not his father, whose examples you must needs allow are weighty, claimed wider privileges than we poor soldiers of the Temple of Zion have won by our zeal in its defence. The protectors of Solomon's Temple may claim licence by the example of Solomon."

"If thou readest the Scripture," said the Jewess, "and the lives of the saints, only to justify thine own license and profligacy, thy crime is like that of him who extracts poison from the most healthful and necessary herbs."

The eyes of the Templar flashed fire at this reproof — "Hearken," he said, "Rebecca; I



have hitherto spoken mildly to thee, but now my language shall be that of a conqueror. Thou art the captive of my bow and spear — subject to my will by the laws of all nations, nor will I abate an inch of my right, or abstain from taking by violence what thou refusest to entreaty or necessity."

"Stand back," said Rebecca — "stand back, and hear me ere thou offerest to commit a sin so deadly! My strength thou may'st indeed overpower, for God made women weak, and trusted their defence to man's generosity. But I will proclaim thy villainy, Templar, from one end of Europe to the other. I will owe to the superstition of thy brethren what their compassion might refuse me. Each Preceptory — each Chapter of thy Order, shall learn, that, like a heretic, thou hast sinned with a Jewess. Those who tremble not at thy crime, will hold thee accursed for having so far dishonoured the cross thou wearest, as to follow a daughter of my people."

"Thou art keen-witted, Jewess," replied the Templar, well aware of the truth of what she spoke, and that the rules of his Order condemned in the most positive manner and un-



der high penalties, such intrigues as he now prosecuted, and that, in some instances, even degradation had followed upon it — “thou art sharp-witted,” he said, “but loud must be thy voice of complaint, if it is heard beyond the iron walls of this castle; within these, murmurs, laments, appeals to justice, and screams for help, die alike silent away. One thing only can save thee, Rebecca. Submit to thy fate — embrace our religion, and thou shalt go forth in such state, that many a Norman lady shall yield as well in pomp as in beauty to the favourite of the best lance among the defenders of the Temple.”

“Submit to my fate!” said Rebecca — “and, sacred Heaven! to what fate? — embrace thy religion! and what religion can it be that harbours such a villain? — *thou* the best lance of the Templars! — craven Knight! — forsworn Priest! I spit at thee, and I defy thee. — The God of Abraham’s promise hath opened an escape to his daughter — even from this abyss of infamy.”

As she spoke, she threw open the latticed window which led to the bartizan, and in an instant after, stood on the very verge of the pa-



rapet, with not the slightest screen between her and the tremendous depth below. Unprepared for such a desperate effort, for she had hitherto stood perfectly motionless, Bois-Guilbert had neither time to intercept nor to stop her. As he offered to advance, she exclaimed, «Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance! — one foot nearer, and I plunge myself from the precipice; my body shall be crushed out of the very form of humanity upon the stones of that courtyard, ere it becomes the victim of thy brutality.»

As she spoke this, she clasped her hands and extended them towards Heaven, as if imploring mercy on her soul before she made the final plunge. The Templar hesitated, and a resolution which had never yielded to pity or distress, gave way to his admiration of her fortitude. «Come down,” he said, «rash girl! — I swear by earth, and sea, and sky, I will offer thee no offence.”

«I will not trust thee, Templar,” said Rebecca; «thou hast taught me better how to estimate the virtues of thine Order. The next Preceptory would grant thee absolution for an oath, the keeping of which concerned nought but the hon-



der high penalties, such intrigues as he now prosecuted, and that, in some instances, even degradation had followed upon it — “thou art sharp-witted,” he said, “but loud must be thy voice of complaint, if it is heard beyond the iron walls of this castle; within these, murmurs, laments, appeals to justice, and screams for help, die alike silent away. One thing only can save thee, Rebecca. Submit to thy fate — embrace our religion, and thou shalt go forth in such state, that many a Norman lady shall yield as well in pomp as in beauty to the favourite of the best lance among the defenders of the Temple.”

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our or the dishonour of a miserable Jewish maiden."

"You do me injustice," said the Templar; "I swear to you by the name which I bear — by the cross on my bosom — by the sword on my side — by the ancient crest of my fathers do I swear, I will do thee no injury whatsoever. If not for thyself, yet for thy father's sake forbear. I will be his friend, and in this castle he will need a powerful one."

"Alas!" said Rebecca, "I know it but too well — dare I trust thee?"

"May my arms be reversed, and my name dishonoured," said Brian De Bois Guilbert, "if thou shalt have reason to complain of me! Many a law, many a commandment have I broken, but my word never."

"I will then trust thee," said Rebecca, "thus far," and she descended from the verge of the battlement, but remained standing close by one of the embrasures, or *machicolles*, as they were then called. — "Here," she said, "I take my stand. Remain where thou art, and if thou shalt attempt to diminish by one step the distance now between us, thou shalt see that the



Jewish maiden will rather trust her soul with God, than her honour to the Templar."

While Rebecca spoke thus, her high and firm resolve, which corresponded so well with the expressive beauty of her countenance, gave to her looks, air, and manner, a dignity that seemed more than mortal. Her glance quailed not, her cheek blanched not, for the fear of a fate so instant and so horrible; on the contrary, the thought that she had her fate at her command, and could escape at will from infamy to death, gave a yet deeper colour of carnation to her complexion, and a yet more brilliant fire to her eye. Bois-Guilbert, proud himself and high-spirited, thought he had never beheld beauty so animated and so commanding.

"Let there be peace between us, Rebecca," he said.

"Peace, if thou wilt," answered Rebecca — "Peace — both with this space between."

"Thou need'st no longer fear me," said Bois-Guilbert.

"I fear thee not," replied she; "thanks to him that reared this dizzy tower so high, that



nought could fall from it and live — thanks to him, and to the God of Israel! — I fear thee not.”

“Thou dost me injustice,” said the Templar; “by earth, sea, and sky, thou dost me injustice. I am not naturally that which you have seen me, hard, selfish, and relentless. It was woman that taught me cruelty, and on woman therefore I have exercised it; but not upon such as thou. Hear me, Rebecca — Never did knight take lance in his hand with a heart more devoted to the lady of his love than Brian de Bois-Guilbert. She, the daughter of a petty baron, who boasted for all his domains but a ruinous tower and an unproductive vineyard, and some few leagues of the barren landes of Bourdeaux, her name was known wherever deeds of arms were done, known wider than that of many a lady’s that had a county for a dowery. — Yes, “he continued, pacing up and down the little platform with an animation in which he seemed to lose all consciousness of Rebecca’s presence — “Yes, my deeds, my danger, my blood, made the name of Adelaide De Montemarre known from the court of Castile to that of Byzantium. And how was I requited? — When I returned with my dear-bought honours,



purchased by toil and blood, I found her wedded to a Gascon squire, whose name was never heard beyond the limits of his own paltry domain! Truly did I love her, and bitterly did I revenge me of her broken faith. But my vengeance has recoiled on myself. Since that day I have separated myself from life and its ties — My manhood must know no domestic home — must be soothed by no affectionate wife — My age must know no kindly hearth — My grave must be solitary, and no offspring must outlive me, to bear the ancient name of Bois-Guilbert. At the feet of my Superior I have laid down the right of self-action — the privilege of independence. The Templar, a serf in all but the name, can possess neither lands nor goods, and lives, moves, and breathes, but at the will and pleasure of another."

"Alas!" said Rebecca, "what advantages could compensate for such an absolute sacrifice?"

"The power of vengeance, Rebecca," replied the Templar, "and the prospects of ambition."

"An evil recompense," said Rebecca, "for the surrender of the rights which are dearest to humanity."



"Say not so, maiden," answered the Templar; "revenge is a feast for the gods! And if they have reserved it, as priests tell us, to themselves, it is because they hold it an enjoyment too precious for the possession of mere mortals. — And ambition? it is a temptation which could disturb even the bliss of heaven itself." — He paused a moment, and then added, "Rebecca! she who could prefer death to dishonour, must have a proud and a powerful soul. Mine thou must be! — Nay, start not," he added, "it must be with thine own consent, and on thine own terms. Thou must consent to share with me hopes more extended than can be viewed from the throne of a monarch — — Hear me ere you answer, and judge ere you refuse. The Templar loses, as thou hast said, his social rights, his power of free agency, but he becomes a member and a limb of a mighty body before which thrones already tremble; even as the single drop of rain which mixes with the sea becomes an individual part of that resistless ocean, which undermines rocks and ingulphs royal armadas. Such a swelling flood is that powerful league. Of this mighty Order I am no mean member, but already one of the Chief Commanders, and may well aspire one day to hold the station of Grand Master.



The poor soldiers of the Temple will not alone place their foot upon the necks of kings — a hemp-sandall'd monk can do that. Our mailed step shall ascend their throne — our gauntlet shall wrench the sceptre from their gripe. Not the reign of your vainly-expected Messias offers such power to your dispersed tribes as my ambition may aim at. I have sought but a kindred spirit to share it, and I have found such in thee."

"Sayest thou this to one of my people?" answered Rebecca. "Bethink thee" — —

"Answer me not," said the Templar, "by urging the difference of our creeds: within our secret conclaves we hold these nursery tales in derision. Think not we long remained blind to the ideotical folly of our founders, who forswore every delight of life for the pleasure of dying martyrs by hunger, by thirst, and by pestilence, and by the swords of savages, while they vainly strove to defend a barren desert, valuable only in the eyes of superstition. Our Order soon adopted bolder and wider views, and found out a better indemnification for our sacrifices. Our immense possessions in every kingdom of Europe, our high military fame,



which brings within our circle the flower of chivalry from every Christian clime — these are dedicated to ends of which our pious founders little dreamed, and which are equally concealed from such weak spirits as embrace our Order on the ancient principles, and whose superstition makes them our passive tools. But I will not further withdraw the veil of our mysteries. That bugle-sound announces something which may require my presence. Think on what I have said. — Farewell! — I do not say forgive me the violence I have threatened, for it was necessary to the display of thy character. Gold can be only known by the application of the touchstone. I will soon return and hold further conference with thee.”

He re-entered the turret-chamber, and descended the stair, leaving Rebecca scarce more terrified at the prospect of the death to which she had been so lately exposed, than at the furious ambition of the bold bad man in whose power she found herself so unhappily placed. When she entered the turret-chamber, her first duty was to return thanks to the God of Jacob for the protection which he had afforded her, and to implore its continuance for her and for her father. Another name glided into her pe-



tition — it was that of the wounded Christian, whom fate had placed in the hands of blood-thirsty men, his avowed enemies. Her heart indeed checked her, as if, even in communing with the Deity in prayer, she mingled in her devotions the recollection of one with whose fate her's could have no alliance — a Nazarene, and an enemy to her faith. But the petition was already breathed, nor could all the narrow prejudices of her sect induce Rebecca to wish it recalled.

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